

THE INTRUDER

(EL INTRUSO)

BY

VICENTE BLASCO-IBÁÑEZ



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Blasco Ibáñez, Vicente, 1867-1928.

The intruder (El intruso)

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VICENTE BLASCO IBAÑEZ has also written

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REEDS AND MUD

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QUEEN CALAFIA

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ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

THE OLD WOMAN OF THE MOVIES AND OTHER
STORIES

Published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

THE INTRUDER

(*El Intruso*)

by

V. BLASCO IBAÑEZ

Author of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,"
"Blood and Sand," "Reeds and Mud," etc.

Authorized Translation from the Spanish

BY

MRS. W. A. GILLESPIE



E. P. DUTTON & CO. INC.

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INTRODUCTION

A FEW words may be necessary to explain the strange religious and political feelings described in this book. The Biscayans are a different race from others in Spain and are generally supposed to be a remnant of the ancient Goths; they differ from the Spaniards in language, character and appearance. In character they are stern, ascetic and frugal, and from having lived for centuries cut off from the rest of the country by the barren chain of mountains to the South, they have become narrow-minded, fanatically religious, and deeply devoted to their ancient and traditional customs and privileges, "fueros" as they are called. In very early days they were governed by a Lord and twelve elders called Jaunes, who, unless summoned especially on occasions of pressing emergency, met once in every two years to transact business under an ancient tree at Guernica. Early in the 14th century the inheritance fell to a girl who was married to a brother of Don Pedro the Cruel, King of Castile and father-in-law of John of Gaunt. Pedro, who had always coveted the Biscayan territory, cut matters short by murdering his brother and seizing the country, and this murder is the theme of many very ancient Spanish ballads. He was forced, how-

ever, to swear to preserve the Biscayan "fueros" which were then and afterwards most zealously guarded. The gloomy religious fanaticism of the people was deepened in the 16th century by the birth, at the ancient family Castle of Loyola, of St. Ignatius, a saint in character in every way congenial to them.

After the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833, the throne of Castile fell to his daughter, afterwards Isabella II. Ferdinand's brother Don Miguel and his son Don Carlos, disputed her right of succession owing to the Salic Law. Isabella's adherents declared that the Salic Law had never existed in Spain, where they had had many excellent queens, but was brought into Spain solely by the Bourbon grandson of Louis XIV. This, and the revocation of the Biscayan "fueros" by Ferdinand, brought about the endless Carlist wars, and threw Don Carlos into the arms of the Biscayans. Isabella stood for liberalism and anticlericalism, while Don Carlos stood for conservatism and bigoted clericalism. During the war he made the inaccessible Biscayan country his headquarters, where he was poetically called "The King of the Biscayan Mountains" and was worshipped with the same devotion the Highlanders displayed toward Charles Edward—and with as little reason.

The mercantile and liberal element had by this time arisen and become strong in Bilbao where Don Carlos and his clerical followers were cordially hated, and the town in consequence stood two fierce sieges

from the Carlists, conducted it is said with equal incapacity on either side.

With regard to the then peculiar religious views of Spaniards in general and of Biscayans in particular, we cannot do better than quote the late Col. Martin Hume:

“For the full significance of it (i. e., the religious feeling) we have to look to the racial character of the Peninsular peoples. From the first dawn of their history we have seen them personally self-centred as no other people were. Each soul was for himself the point round which the universe revolved. His God and himself in communion shut out from his view other considerations; and at some periods of the history of his country, this feeling justified in his eyes acts that a more human view than his would have condemned. The spiritual exaltation which sprang from these conditions was cleverly made use of by kings and statesmen for the purpose of forging the weapon that was to make Spain temporarily irresistible to the world—and it did so. There was no defeat possible for men who, in their heart of hearts, believed that they were fighting the enemies of God Himself, and that suffering, that privation, that death itself were only special marks of distinction conferred on them by the Most High, to be repaid by bliss a thousandfold in the world to come.”

W. A. G.

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CHAPTER I

THE dawn was just breaking when Dr. Aresti was awakened by a vigorous shake of his shoulder. Opening his eyes he saw his housekeeper Katalina bending over him with her sallow face, wrinkled like a dried apple.

“Don Luis . . . wake up. There is a dead man on the road to Ortuella. The judge is on his way there.”

The doctor began to dress, after many good stretches and a lengthy search for his clothes amongst the piles of books and reviews which, overflowing from the shelves in the adjoining room, had spread into his bachelor bedroom.

He had two other doctors under his orders in the hospital at Gallarta, but on that day they were both absent; one was on leave in Bilbao, and the other since the previous evening had been in Galdanes attending to several miners who had been injured by a dynamite explosion.

Katalina helped him into his heavy overcoat and opened the street door while he put on his cap and searched for his blackthorn, a heavy staff pointed

with iron like a lance which always accompanied him on his visits to the mines.

"I say, Katalina," said he as he crossed the threshold, "do you know who the dead man is?"

"The teacher, they say. He who taught the boys their letters, and was the lover of that girl they call La Charanga. What a state Gallarta is in. Good Lord! But what can you expect with the church always empty!"

"The usual thing," grunted the doctor, "a crime of passion. It is not enough for these barbarians to live starving, but they must needs kill each other for a woman."

Aresti was already some way down the street, when the old woman called to him from the door.

"Don Luis, come back quickly. Don't forget that today is St. Joseph's Day and that you are expected in Bilbao. Don't play your cousin one of your usual tricks."

Aresti did not fail to note the respect with which the old woman spoke of the cousin who had invited him to dine on his name day. His was a name which in all that mining district was always pronounced with just this very respect if not with an almost religious awe. Even those who cried out against his wealth and power feared him as a force that none could successfully withstand.

As the doctor strode out of Gallarta he buttoned up his coat, shivering with cold. A leaden, foggy sky resting like a grey awning upon the mountains half hid their summits, while the furious wind that blew

from the heights of Triana almost whirled the solitary wayfarer off his course and all but tore the woolen cap from his head. Aresti steadied his spectacles and trudged on, still only half awake, with the resigned patience of a doctor who is a slave to all the ills of others. At each step the thick soles of his mountain boots stuck in the mud and the iron point of his staff left a little wet hole behind it.

The night before Aresti had supped with several of the most prominent mine contractors of Gallarta. Although but common workmen once, now that they were on their way to becoming millionaires, these new-made employers felt it quite beneath them to mix any longer with their old comrades of the pick and shovel, or even to associate with the tradespeople of Bilbao. But they all still clung to the doctor, never failing in their marks of courtesy to him, for it aroused a certain pride in them to feel that this Dr. Aresti, who had studied abroad and whom all in the town held in great respect, should choose to live amongst them in the primitive, almost barbarous society of the mining districts. They were flattered by this as though it were a definite declaration on the doctor's part of the superiority of the miners of the Encartaciones over the workmen of Bilbao. And mingled with their other feelings was an almost superstitious reverence for the cousin of Sanchez Morueta who never concealed his own great affection for the doctor.

Sanchez Morueta! It was as though one spoke of the Deity! For many years he had not visited

the mines. In Bilbao itself even the most intimate of his friends for many months at a time would not see his grizzled beard and his gigantic muscular frame. Everyone was curious about him, no one was insensible to the sound of his name, from the Governor of Bilbao down to the smallest ragamuffin in Gallarta. From the heights of Triana could be seen numberless mines, railway lines with trains of cars, inclined planes, aerial tramways, gangs of men crowding to the quarries—they were his, all his. And his also were the huge furnaces which flamed day and night close to the Nervion, smelting the steel; his were a great part of the steamers moored to the quays loading mineral and discharging pit coal, and many more besides which carried the registered ensign of Bilbao over many distant seas. His also were the majority of the new palaces in the suburb as well as innumerable factories, copper foundries, and tin plate works scattered over distant corners of Vizcaya. He was like God, unseen but everywhere felt. If he simply wished to do so he could make a man rich between night and morning and even those august beings in Madrid who governed the country sought him out and fawned upon him, asking his assistance when the government was in difficulties and needed a loan.

Yet here was Dr. Aresti, loved by Sanchez Morueta with the double affection of a father and a brother, yet determined to live independent of him out beyond that stream of gold which, seeming to flow even from the great man's very glance, made

other men so crowd around him in their brutal lust for wealth that he was forced to keep out of their way and to remain invisible in order that he might avoid being well-nigh smothered by an eager mob of worshippers! The only favor the doctor had ever asked of his powerful relative was the establishment of a hospital for the care of the miners so that they would no longer suffer and die from want of medical attendance. And yet with all his reputation as a practitioner in the Paris hospitals, and the popularity his daring operations had won for him in the town, he had come before he was thirty years of age to bury himself in the mines, living in a small house in Gallarta with his books and his old servant Katalina. The contractors, the foremen, the metallurgists, all the people who formed the permanent society at the mines worshipped Aresti, joining to their adoration something of that wonder that the contempt of material riches awakens in the common mind.

"He likes to live with us," they proudly told one another. "He much prefers a meal with people of the woollen caps to a banquet in Sanchez Morueta's palace on the Arenas. Fancy being a cousin of Sanchez Morueta and spending whole months without seeing him! Strange fellow, that doctor!"

The miserable crowd of miners, lodging in their huts or canteens, had a blind faith in his skill, they looked upon him as upon a wizard capable of performing the greatest miracles to patch up the imperfections of the human frame. On the moun-

tain paths many a crippled man could be met who was an eloquent testimonial to the surgeon's skill and care after some horrible catastrophe in the mines.

The first thought of a miner wounded by a blast, or of a boy half buried by a landslip in the quarries was of the doctor. "Get Don Luis," would be his first word.

And as their eyes glazed with agony saw the doctor's spectacles, his keen eyes beneath his shaggy eyebrows and his pointed beard, the poor creatures would be filled with a sudden confidence; they would refuse to acknowledge the approach of death, hoping until the last moment for the miracle that would save them.

The other doctors of the district were received by the sick with sad resignation. Don Luis! No one but Dr. Aresti! And the ladies of Gallarta, wives of the contractors, former country women who were bored to death in their gaudy chalets built in the suburbs of the town, developed ailments unsuspected in former times, solely for the pleasure of a chat with the doctor, who besides his professional talents carried with him something of the grandeur of Sanchez Morueta and of the higher classes of Bilbao into which they dreamed of entering some day. The husbands no less than their wives desired Aresti's presence. They consulted him on family affairs, and as soon as their work was over in the mines they sought him in the evenings, organizing Gargantuan feasts in his honor. They took him with them to the trials of oxen and to the contests of blasters, brutal amuse-

ments arranged in every town in the province, where bets to the amount of thousands of duros changed hands.

Aresti had gone to bed very late the night before he had been awakened to set off on the case of the dead teacher. As he had been invited to dine in Bilbao with Don José (for this was the nickname of the powerful Sanchez Morueta) all the rich men of Gallarta who bore the same name could not lose this opportunity of paying the doctor their respects, and the supper at the principal inn of the place had lasted till past midnight. It was a banquet of popular and substantial dishes, such as those men, so suddenly grown rich, had dreamed of in their days of starvation: rabbits from the mountain, fowls in every kind of stew, salt cod in various forms, an interminable string of other dishes, washed down from the first to the last with champagne of the choicest brands. Champagne for these people was the distinctive sign of wealth, the only thing they had been able to copy from the higher classes. They liked to have it of the dearest brands because that proved their wealth. They squandered it by the caseful, opening the bottles by breaking the necks, laughing like children when the liquid overflowed on to the floor, sprinkling each other with the foam, drinking it out of tankards, often filling basins with it that they might wash their faces in the costly stuff—reckless wasting that never failed to produce great hilarity by dessert time.

Aresti smiled as he recalled the festivity of the

previous night, the childish extravagances of these rapidly enriched men unable to display their wealth in any better way in the isolated and hard life they led in the mountains.

Without slackening his pace the doctor gazed for a long time at a red hill on one side of the road. That mound rising in the landscape was the work of man. It had been formed basketful by basketful, and under its shadow Gallarta and the wealth of the district had come into being. It was the waste from the mine of San Miguel de Begoña, the most celebrated workings in the Encartaciones. Here had begun the fortunes of Sanchez Morueta and of the other potentates in Bilbao. The mountain of dross was the sole visible reminder of what here had taken place, for the money that the mine had produced had gone into the town, and the nameless workers who had given up their lives in extracting the mineral were now in the bowels of the earth.

Aresti saw in the distance a group of people standing by the road side; several women and children ran past him, stopping now and then for an instant to call to those who were perched on the rubbish heaps close by:

“Hey! They have murdered the teacher! We are going to look at him.”

And they ran on towards the group among which could be distinguished the black uniforms and caps with metal badges belonging to two members of the police force. Some youngsters, mining apprentices, carrying in either hand a dynamite cartridge for the

blasters, pushed their way through the crowd to look at the dead man.

In the middle of the road a number of carts were halted with their Biscayan oxen, small and fine limbed animals carrying between their horns yokes padded with sheep's skins.

The closely packed group opened up as the doctor arrived, allowing him to see a man lying in the ditch with his clothes all torn and dirty. Blood and mud had covered his face as with a mask, but Aresti had only to bend over to assure himself that he had been dead for several hours.

The municipal judge, one of the contractors who had supped with Aresti the night before, explained the tragedy to him, grumbling all the while at the trouble it had caused him at such an early hour. The teacher's death must have been almost instantaneous, he had received a blow in the heart, one of those dagger thrusts to be met with only in the mines, where so many live who have come out of prison. He had also been stabbed in the face, in the hands, and all over his body. Two people must have attacked him after nightfall as he was returning from Bilbao. To the judge the matter presented no difficulties. He would go straight from there and apprehend the culprits without the slightest fear of making a mistake.

He reminded Aresti in a few words of the dead man's history. He was an Andalusian, a silent man of melancholy temperament, who had wandered all over the world seeking his livelihood; he had tried a

hundred different trades in America and had worked in every mine in Spain. In the evenings, when he returned from his work he gave lessons to the mine boys. He lived as a boarder in the house of the parents of la Charanga, a handsome and dissolute girl, who had set all the youth of Gallarta by the ears, preferring amongst them all, however, a rebellious young fellow who wandering from quarry to quarry, had been dismissed from each of them in turn for his insolence, and who at the Sunday dances attracted everyone's attention by his smart waist sash rolled from his chest to his hips and stuffed with an arsenal of weapons.

The teacher had fallen in love with a Charanga with the silent concentrated passion of a man of forty. The parents liked him, praising his steady habits and the persistence he showed in earning his livelihood, while the girl with the indifference of a happy animal, said yes to everybody, continuing in the meantime her relations with the young ruffian. They were to have been married this same week, and the teacher had walked the day before to Bilbao to buy some presents for his bride. On his return the lover and his father must have waylaid him on the road.

Aresti heard groans behind him. In the crowd an old miner stood wiping his eyes with his hands.

"Anton! . . . poor Maestrico! how terrible to kill a man like this! . . . So good . . . such a hard worker!"

It was the father of la Charanga weeping before the body of his boarder.

The doctor noticed the dead man's distended belt and ordered one of the soldiers to unfasten the black waist sash. A pair of women's shoes were drawn out with white soles and dazzling polish, the foot gear that the mine girls dream of as things of supreme elegance. The poor teacher had gone to the town to buy this present for his bride.

The crowd now opened out with a murmur of curiosity as on the arrival of an expected personage of importance. It was la Charanga, with her hands on her powerful hips, her large handsome insolent eyes overshadowed by her untidy hair, and as she shamelessly smiled she displayed a row of wolflike teeth.

"Is it true that they have killed—this?"

And she fixed her eyes on the doctor, in the same bold way that she had often done before in invitation to him to follow her when she met him in the fields. Then she looked at the corpse, coldly, without emotion. But when her eyes fell on the patent leather shoes she burst out laughing.

"Redios! But I might have waited for my shoes last night!"

That was all that entered her mind as she stood before the body of the man who was to have been her husband. Then elbowing her way through the men who moved away as they felt the contact of her hips, she strolled off from the crowd with superb indifference, thinking possibly of the other man who for love of her would have to go to prison.

"The beast!" said the doctor to the judge while

his glance followed her. "The handsome beast of primitive days, delighted that the males should kill each other to possess her—that is all that's to be seen here."

Aresti smiled with the satisfaction of a naturalist who examines a curious animal in his cabinet.

Many fresh groups were coming from Gallarta, attracted by the news of the murder, and the judge seemed in a hurry to start with the soldiers in search of the criminals. Some of the dead man's friends picked up the body, carrying it to a cart to convey it to the village. The doctor started on his way home, but he soon noticed that a youth of about fourteen, one of the mine apprentices, was going along with him, sometimes walking by his side, sometimes on in front, but always gazing at him with unnaturally wide open eyes, bright and imploring as though filled with tears.

"What's the matter, my boy?" said Aresti in that hearty voice of his which always seemed to inspire the unfortunate with confidence.

"Señor . . . Doctor," moaned the boy, "my father . . . my poor father . . ."

And no longer able to contain the pain so long repressed, further words were caught in his throat and he burst into tears.

Aresti looked at him. He did not belong to this country, that was plain; he must be a "maketo," a foreigner, one of those who came in parties from Castile or Leon, driven by hunger and attracted by the wages at the mines. A pair of blue trousers with

patches added to the seat and knees flapped over his hob-nailed shoes. The black waist sash confined a red flannel shirt hardly covered by a loose jacket, and the tangle of curly hair matted with mud and dirt escaped from beneath an old cap. Unwashed and with clothes worn for months at a time without change, there was no mistaking his calling. Aresti knew that perfume of the mines; the smell of strong bodies which work, sweat and sleep always in the same coverings.

"Your father. Yes, I understand you," he said kindly. "What has happened to your father? Tell me about it."

The apprentice explained haltingly. His father was up there, in Labarga, in a workman's hut very ill, dying. At day break he had wished to rise and go to his work with the rest of his companions, but his skin was burning and he was delirious. It had rained the day before, and he had got wet at the quarry. He, who was his son, had remained behind to look after him. "But what can I do, Señor? He is very bad, very. He must be bad for him to make up his mind to lose his daily wage!"

The boy kept repeating this about losing his day's wages, as though it were the best evidence of the gravity of the sick man's condition.

Aresti endeavoured to comfort him, saying he would send the doctor now in Galdanes as soon as he returned, but the boy burst into tears afresh.

"Señor Doctor . . . you, only you . . . I beg it of you, for what I love best in the world. . . . I came

down from Labarga for this. You know more than all of them put together. People say that you work miracles."

Seizing the doctor's hand he kissed it repeatedly, not knowing what more to say and as if this display of respect were a language of its own wherewith he could persuade him.

"That will do, my boy," said Aresti laughing. "Stop that! I would go to Labarga if only to prevent your kissing me with that dirty face. But what a rage Katalina will be in when she knows I have gone up the mountain!"

The boy being calmed by the doctor's promise, spoke now with less difficulty in answer to the questions put to him. They came from Zamora; he and his father had entered the mines with six other peasants. For three successive years they had made this journey at the beginning of winter. They owned their little bit of land at home and they cultivated green stuffs and rye; the women took charge of the fields during the cold weather while the men undertook the journey to Bilbao in search of the fabulous wages, from eleven reals to three pesetas, of which the peasants spoke in wonder in their country. When summer came round, they returned to their village to reap their harvest and to sow for the succeeding year. The work in the mines was heavy and the life was hard, but they could return home with good savings.

"I, Señor Doctor, can earn seven reals, my father eleven or twelve. We pay a real for our bed, and five

reals each for our food, for everything here is ruinous. There are further expenses for shoes and socks, for the mineral destroys everything. Besides in this country it rains almost every week and many days one cannot work. The sum total is, that drinking no wine, and eating very little, at the end of ten months we can return home with forty or fifty duros."

"But you will be quite rich some day," said Aresti.

"Don't you believe it, Sir!" the boy replied simply. "The government takes it all. We pay our taxes with it."

Aresti walked on some way in silence. Once more he was astonished at the simplicity, and humility of these people, so hardworking, so resigned to every sort of privation, but without the slightest thought of protest in their sluggish brains. They abandoned home and family to lead a camping life, bending double over the red stone, hewing it out of the rock from sunrise to sunset, with a waste of energy that their wretched food could not renew, hastening on day by day the ruin of their constitutions; and all this painful sacrifice to retain a right of proprietorship over a few acres of unproductive land, to support with drops of blood and fragments of their lives the exterior pomp with which the State surrounded itself.

As they entered Gallarta, the doctor walked hurriedly past his own house, fearing lest Katalina should see them and upbraid him for going up the mountain.

"Look sharp youngster, come along quick! It is

seven o'clock now, and I have to catch the train for Bilbao."

They walked quickly through the principal street of Gallarta, a steep and stony hill with two rows of little houses following in wavy lines all its twists and turns. They were miserable little buildings, constructed of the mineral itself in the days when it was less sought after, with thick walls pierced by small windows with hanging balconies which threatened to fall, the upper stories made of worm eaten timber. The roofs with large projecting eaves were of loose red tiles weighted down against the wind by a border of large stones. In the lower stories were the shops of Gallarta, taverns for the most part. A few windows with dirty panes of glass served as show windows, displaying shoes and old and rusty tin ware, the liquidation of debts in the city sent to the mines where everything however bad or dear was bought without objection. On account of the steep grade of the street and the different levels between the houses, many of the houses had flights of steps up to their doors like ancient towers, while others were as deep as caves with a staircase inside by which to descend. The fronts of some of the shops were festooned with multi-colored garments and altogether the street with its dark and narrow shops and its low houses, made one think of one of those crooked Arab villages. Several carts had come to a standstill outside the taverns, the patient oxen lowering their heads and swishing their tails, while their drivers quarreled over their glasses of wine inside.

Aresti had good legs and being accustomed to that mountainous country and leaning on his stick he had no difficulty in following the boy who almost ran up the steep road in the direction of Labarga, a suburb of Gallarta, situated in the very midst of the mines. As they ascended the hill the wind blew stronger and the landscape opened out, the mountains appeared higher and the valleys were veiled in the morning mist. Towards the sea Serantes, which guards the entrance to the river at Bilbao, reared its mass crowned by a deserted castle against the leaden sky. Below spread the broad dark belt of the sea forming little bays as it ran inland here and there between the jutting promontories.

It had been some time since the doctor had gone up the hill to Labarga on foot and the view came to him almost as a novelty. Without slackening his pace he examined the landscape. A little white village at the foot of Serantes was San Pedro Abanto, further on by the bank of a river rose the mountain of Somorrostro, both famous names known throughout Spain since the civil war.

Suddenly, as though there were a renewal of the bloody struggle, several trumpet calls rang out on the heights over-shadowing the road, the earth shook with a dull rumbling and explosions one after the other rent the air amid clouds of dust and red stones. It was the blasting at the mines, fired every morning and evening, close upon the watchmen's trumpets sounded to warn people out of the way. On beyond these nearby mines other explosions could be heard,

and again others still further away, the whole mineral basin trembling under the incessant cannonading as though the folds and crags of the mountains held concealed batteries of artillery.

The noise and the smoke recalled to the doctor's mind the famous battle of the Encartaciones when the Liberal army had endeavored to raise the siege of Bilbao for the second time.

He had not been present at the fight, but it was almost as though he had been, so often had he heard the story told by old men of the neighborhood and by many of the contractors who were then starving peasants and who in order to escape the anger of their village priests had taken up arms in defence of the Lord and of their liberties. In a little white house which the doctor could discern among the oaks in the plain, two of the best Carlist generals had been killed by a cannon ball. Then he looked at the mountain of Somorrostro, isolated and frowning, where the plow still unearthed men's bones. The great carnage had been there. There the government force of soldiers and marines, with the bravery of a bull who rushes on regardless of the cost, had charged the enemy uphill amidst a devastating fire delivered at them from behind carefully prepared entrenchments so long as the defenders' ammunition had held out. Then death had come tearing down the mountain with the heavy iron axles and wheels torn from the mine wagons. These chariots of destruction, bounding from rock to rock, gathering more and more momentum as they sped on, crashing in their

mad career among the red and blue troops, crushing the men, breaking their bones, tearing their bodies apart, at last covered with blood and glutted with their victims had buried themselves in the soft earth of the plain below.

Imbeciles! Imbeciles!—mentally ejaculated the doctor, as he thought sadly of the thousands of dead men lying on these and other more distant hills, sleeping their last sleep in the Biscayan soil, and all for a family quarrel cleverly engineered in the name of religious sentiment. In contrast to those scenes of violence the doctor as he continued on his way noted the signs of man's productive labor, of his daily struggle for the treasures of the earth—the aerial tramways for the transport of the ore from the mines, with their cables supported by stout posts along which glided the rows of buckets loaded with the metal, passing over ravines and rocks, from stage to stage, always downwards to the plain, to the wharfs of Ortuella and the railway at Triana, the outlet of the mines.

At the bottom of the great cuttings of the quarries the wagons of ore drawn by horses ran along light rails; further on there were huge wooden platforms and inclined planes along which a double row of trolleys was worked by an endless chain. At another point his gaze took in the automatic line of some foreign company covering several leagues of ground, with its endless double row of vehicles operating to and fro over bridged chasms and through many tunnels. The whole landscape seemed turned upside

down by the hand of man; everything had changed places, the heights had been thrown down by pick and blasting, while the ravines had been filled up and turned to hills with slag. Even the course of the brooks had been changed so that their waters now ran covered with muddy foam through narrow conduits in the rocks. The meadows of former days and the cultivated land with its maize fields, all had vanished, nothing remained but the ironstone rock and the red earth so prized by men.

The road skirted the top of a deep quarry; it seemed impossible that such an abyss could be the work of man accomplished in only a few years. The swarms of men at the bottom working with their picks looked like insects, and the horses seemed to have come out of a toy box. At one end of the gigantic excavation the mountain had slipped down. The doctor recalled the catastrophe which had happened four years before when a large part of the quarry had been carried down headlong, burying in its descent a gang of men who were working in it. Some had been crushed to death instantly, others had been caught in a shaft and barred from escape by hundreds of tons of mineral. The people in horror had put their ears against the masses of fallen rock thinking they could hear the cries for help, the groans of the unhappy men perishing slowly in the bowels of the earth. Days and nights passed, hundreds of men worked with superhuman energy to remove the avalanche, but after a week's work they had only advanced a few yards. Then all was silence.

Of many of these men not even the names were known, they had come to the mines a short time previously and only their nicknames were known to the foreman. Possibly, thought the doctor, they are still being expected in some far off corner of Spain, with the hope that the longer their absence, the larger the amount of savings they will bring back.

The remembrance of these buried men was fading now from men's memory. The accidents in that cruel exploitation were so frequent that the last one blotted out the memory of those before; one day it was the wagons running into one another that killed a workman, another day they would run off the rails on an inclined plane crashing into a gang of men bending over their work, unsuspecting of the terrible death coming down behind them; or it would be a blast exploding unexpectedly and showering stones into the works to crush and kill the miners. And as though all this were not enough, knives had to be reckoned with as the men came out of the taverns, or when they fought in the quarries. On pay day the ferocity and fury of the great crowd of workers driven on by their misery often knew no bounds, for here mixed together and ready for anything were convicts from the prisons of Santona, Valladolid or Burgos, who upon release had found no other way open to them but that leading to the mines of Bilbao where strong arms were wanted and where no one enquired who a man was or whence he came.

Death was always vigilant and busy amongst this wretched population, and there were always

dozens of men in hospital moaning for Don Luis.

Aresti woke out of his reverie when he saw that they were entering the only street of Labarga, two rows of such miserable hovels perched on the rocks bordering the road that the houses in Gallarta seemed palatial when compared with them. These hovels, known in the country by the name of *chabolas*, had partitions of thin wood and roofs of corrugated iron. The doors consisted of two pieces, the lower half of which could be left closed while the upper could be opened to admit light and air. The constant rains had rotted the huts, softening the wood and disintegrating its fibre till it bore the appearance of being completely wormeaten. Outside the houses, rags of faded colors were hung out to dry. A few weak and scrawny chickens were running about the road and children were sitting grave and motionless before the doorways, as though they were a different race from the turbulent urchins of the plains.

As they saw Don Luis approaching many of the women ran out of their dens, all smiles at such an unexpected event and conscious at once of all sorts of infirmities that they had previously quite forgotten.

"It is Don Luis!" they cried one to another. "Señor Doctor, come here! . . . look at this little boy for me! . . . do come in and see my mother!"

But Aresti knew of old what this reception meant, and he continued on his way smiling at one, answering another with a kindly word, always preceded by the Zamorran boy, who kept turning his head to

watch, as though he feared the doctor might be spirited away by the group of gossips.

A man with a long curly, grizzled beard sat smoking in front of the worst hut of the lot. His eyes were almost hidden beneath his heavy eyebrows and his dusky face was contracted in deep contempt. On seeing the doctor he neither raised his hand to his woollen cap nor abandoned his fakir-like immobility. He seemed as though completely lost in the contemplation of the misery that surrounded him.

"Good day, friend Barbas!" said the doctor gaily, stopping before him. "What's the matter, comrade?"

"Much and bad, Don Luis."

"And this revolution, when are we going to have it?"

El Barbas looked at Aresti for a moment with frowning eyes as though he were going to insult him, then spitting his tobacco from his mouth he answered with contempt:

"You may laugh, Don Luis. You are accustomed to hearing rich men as well as poor men complain of pain, and to seeing that all equally die. Therefore you ridicule all that happens to men. After all, we are no more than animals. You do quite right. Laugh . . . but the heavy thunder clap is drawing near. Some day all these robbers will meet with their deserts . . . all of them! including your cousin Sanchez Morueta."

"And I, comrade," queried the doctor, "what will you do with me?"

"You are a jester who laughs at life, but between

jest and earnest you do good to the poor, and you live close to their poverty. You are almost one of us."

"Thanks, comrade Barbas."

And by a gesture giving the hermit to understand that he would return and talk to him, he went up the steps of a hovel at the door of which the boy was anxiously awaiting him.

It was a workmen's house, the miserable refuge of the mountain miners, where the day laborers herded together. Aresti knew well these smoky, foul-smelling dens. Near the doorway he saw the stove, with a few bits of old pottery set out on two shelves, and then he noticed the wooden partitions of the structure looking as though the grime and dirt of the inner rooms had exuded through the boards. An old woman thin of face but enormous of body on account of the many shawls she had wrapped around herself and the thick folds of her innumerable skirts, was watching the simmering of a stew, her hands crossed over her sacking apron and her head bound around with a red kerchief. Some thin and mangy cats prowled round the woman, hoping that something would fall from the stewing pot; sullen, ferocious animals, little tigers, which somehow managed to nourish themselves on the hunger and want of their masters.

The old woman broke out into lamentations when she recognized Don Luis. The poor miner was very bad indeed: it was doubtful if he could be pulled through! She had taken a liking to him having had

him so many years in her house. But in spite of her noisy grief, there was such an expression of coldness in her eyes, that the doctor upbraided her sharply.

"Above all, what you feel most, tia Gertrudes, is losing the real a day if he dies."

"Ay! Don Luis, my son! We are poor, and there are daily getting to be more workmen's houses. My poor old man is almost useless from rheumatism and now earns less than a boy who picks over the washings. He may be thankful they allow him what they do, for with that small wage and with boarding these men from Zamorra we can only just get along! Ay Señor! After having worked so hard all his life!"

The doctor raised a faded red cotton curtain, which hid the dark windowless den occupied by the old people's bed. Pulling aside another similar rag he found a wretched room not much larger, entirely filled by an enormous bed or platform, built up of unplanned planks and several benches. On this slept the gang from Zamorra, seven men and a boy, huddled close together, and with no more air than that which came through the half door or the cracks in the roof. Several large sacks filled with maize leaves covered the platform serving as a mattress, four blankets sewn together formed the only covering for the eight, while close by the wall lay several dirty pillows of unbleached cotton, shining from the friction of greasy heads.

Aresti thought sadly of the nights passed in such a den. It was to this that the miners returned every night worn out by the labor of breaking up the

blasted rocks, with loading the stones on to the wagons, with dragging them as far as the loading wharf and then with dragging the empty wagons back again. After a bad meal of beans and potatoes with a little salt fish or bacon they slept in that hole, only removing their boots, or at most their jackets, keeping on the rest of their clothes soaked with sweat or rain. The doctor knew well what the air must be in such a place, confined under a roof that could be touched with the hand, heavy with the exhalation of so many pairs of lungs and laden with the odor of dirty bodies and clothes.

The doctor was confident that the eight men who slept in common on these planks were friends, fellow countrymen, bound together by ties of birth and the adventures of their yearly pilgrimage. From them his thoughts turned in pity to those other workmen's huts, just as wretched as this one, where probably the men lying on the same planks had never seen one another before, where some unhappy boy newly come from his own country, might sleep perhaps alongside a man also just arrived and recently out of prison, perhaps beside someone with an infectious disease. Terrible was the leaven of this constant influx of these poor wretched!

Aresti saw the sick man lying at the further end of the platform close to the wall, breathing in gasps. Accustomed to visiting these miners' huts, nothing surprised him, and jumping on to the platform with a boy's agility, he crawled along on his knees over the sacks. He lighted a small wax taper and saw

that on the partition above the bolster which had once been white was nailed a crucifix flanked on either side by several colored prints of popular generals, their faces stern and haughty, their breasts ablaze with ribbons and crosses—heroes of the war who had covered themselves with glory by capturing territory from the enemy or by shooting down defenceless natives.

The doctor could not help smiling.

"I wonder how those worthies came here?" he said to himself.

The prints might have been put up simply to decorate the miserable place and without thought of their contrast with the crucifix, or perhaps some honest and enthusiastic soldier who had served under those immortal leaders had placed them there as a memento of his own career in the army.

The sick man's eyes were closed, and he breathed with difficulty. His skin was burning. He was still wearing the clothes that had been soaked by the rain of the night before.

"Pneumonia of the most serious kind," said the doctor, blowing out the taper and getting off the bed.

Once outside he stood by the stove and on a leaf of his pocket book wrote a prescription to be taken down to the hospital by the boy who seemed at once much quieted by his visit.

When Aresti came out of the hovel, having made sundry recommendations to the old woman, he found one of the most friendly of the contractors waiting

for him on the road. He was dressed in a showy woolen suit, with a heavy gold watch-chain across his waistcoat; over his shoes and almost up to his knees he wore high gaiters of the waterproof canvas used as covering for the cases of dynamite.

"Hello! my Lord," said the doctor, "is there no divine service today in the chapel at Baracaldo?"

"Don Luis," replied the contractor, with a certain unction of manner, "you know full well this is not a festival day in our religion."

"And my Lady—is she as beautiful and elegant as ever?"

"Come, come, don't laugh at us, you know we are only poor rustics."

The contractor then begged the doctor as he was in Labarga to go to the canteen of his confidential foreman, Tocino, who had been for some days confined to his bed with rheumatism. Aresti demurred, alleging his visit to Bilbao.

"Only for one moment, Don Luis, nothing more, just to come in and go out. I am in a hurry also to get to the mine, I miss poor Tocino terribly when he is not there!"

The doctor allowed himself to be led a few minutes beyond Labarga, to a hill on which was Tocino's shop. On the way he chaffed the contractor about his religion. Once foreman of mines to an English company, he had attracted the attention of the directing engineer by dint of his unremitting vigilance, and because he never allowed the miners a moment's rest from sunrise to sunset. His chief's interest in

him had enabled him to become a contractor and had put him on the road to wealth, and not knowing how otherwise to show his gratitude to the Englishman he had become a Protestant. To bind himself more intimately to his patrons, upon the death of his wife he had sent his only daughter for six years to a school in England, whence the girl had returned modest enough in appearance but with ideas of comfort which astonished all Gallarta. On Sundays My Lord and My Lady went down to Baracaldo, dressed in clothes ordered in London, to mix with the families of the English engineers and mechanics employed in the mines or in the foundries along the river, who filled the only Protestant Chapel in the country. Aresti, who had acquired a certain dread of My Lady's flirting propensities, and who, moreover, had heard sundry stories of young men scaling her bedroom window at night, with an irony the father did not grasp, praised his sprightly offshoot who had gained so much from her foreign pruning.

"Ah! English education!" exclaimed the contractor, opening his mouth wide in admiration, "it is a great thing! You ought to see all that child knows. The truth is she is accustomed to such refinements that she is disgusted among us brutes. But between ourselves, Don Luis, I have my own plan. My ambition is to marry her to one of the partners of the Company."

"You will do very well," said the doctor, with waggish gravity, remembering the young lady's light

conduct now that she was free in the mines after the restraints of school life.

They soon arrived at Tocino's canteen, a construction of rubble and mortar with a large wooden balcony. From this height the eye took in the whole district of the Encartaciones, besides the harbor of Bilbao, the estuary and Portugalete. A number of villages clustered together on the banks of the Nervion seemed to form one town while in the distance, in a gap between the mountains, the site of the busy city could be guessed from the smoke of its foundries and factories mingling with the leaden sky. At the mouth of the estuary could be seen the high suspension bridge, the Bridge of Biscay, looking in the distance like a great black triumphal arch.

In the lower story of the canteen were piled up all sorts of articles and provisions—some on shelves, others behind dirty glass doors, and others hanging from the ceiling. There were kept all those provisions to gain which men spent their days and risked their lives in the mines. Aresti knew that food only too well—beans and potatoes with a little bacon. Rice was only in demand when potatoes were dear, salt cod and pieces of American dried beef hung from the ceiling between great strings of onions and garlic.

The bread was piled up behind the counter under the eyes of its owners, as though they feared their customers would steal it or that the starving creatures who swarmed outside would make a sudden

rush for it. From the beams of the roof hung all kinds of cooking utensils, on the shelves were piled pieces of canvas, tins of preserved foods, iron tools, canvas shoes, glassware, but all so old, so rusty, so grimy, that both the goods and the provisions looked as though they had been dug up after centuries of burial. Over it all spread the smell of a rotting barrel of sardines standing in a corner.

Behind the counter were Tocino's wife and son, the latter a yellow-faced youth with a crafty look to him. They were Biscayans, but Aresti always thought as he looked at their cruel eyes, at the fawning way in which they robbed their despised customers and at their wretched garments, that there was something Jewish about them. They were so hated by the people of the neighborhood that on the slightest sign of trouble in the mines they locked their door and served out bread through a small window. In spite of their meanness and careful saving, they were so miserable and sordid in appearance that they were even more depressing to look upon than the people outside. The doctor remembered the oratory at the workmen's meetings to which he had gone out of curiosity, the denunciations of the corrupt managers of the canteens who grew fat on the sweat of the workers, swelling themselves by sucking honest people's blood, and he said to himself gravely, "No, certainly such food does not seem to agree much with these people."

At the entrance of the canteen was a kind of wooden cage with a little window to it. Inside this

place the master of the shop was seated behind a desk, wrapped up in blankets, continually moaning and groaning but never ceasing to pore over a number of old ledgers filled with lines and strange signs, with which he kept his extremely complicated accounts.

The contractor showed much astonishment at finding him there, as he was bringing no less a person than Dr. Aresti to see him, thinking him in danger of death. While the doctor examined him with the indifference of one used to much more serious cases, Tocino broke out into complaints which were echoed by his wife. He was much worse than any of them thought; he could not move; the pains were enough to kill him; but business must come before everything and he was obliged to make up his accounts, as they were getting so near pay day.

"Get along, Tocino," said Aresti, "there is nothing much the matter with you, nothing but what will disappear with a change of weather. A big man like you to complain like a bear in his cage! It is the good time you give yourself; the way you fatten on what you rob."

"What things this Don Luis thinks of!" exclaimed the contractor, looking at the woman, who showed her yellow teeth in an endeavor to join her husband's protector in a laugh.

"Rob!" groaned Tocino. "Rob! You are always singing the same song! You listen so much to all the miners in your mania for coddling them when they are taken off to the hospital that you end by

believing everything they tell you. No one robs here. All that is done here is to defend what belongs to one."

Tocino waxed indignant, forgetting his aches and pains. He sold his goods on credit, he did, and exposed himself to the risk of losing them. What was more natural than that he should not fall asleep in recovering what was his own when pay day at the mines came around? One must know what these miners are, each one from a different country. They eat on credit during the whole month, and on settling day, if they found it possible they did what was called "the curve"; that is, they got their money and went off to the tavern, carefully avoiding passing by the shops where they owed money. But such tricks were of no avail with Tocino and others who were foremen as well as shop-keepers, for these paid the men's wages at their shops after first deducting whatever was owed for food and other purchases. All the same he had his losses, had Tocino, from those who worked only for a week or so and then disappeared, after having obtained more on credit than the value of their wages.

Aresti took advantage of a pause to upbraid the foreman.

"Tocino, you are a thief who sells to the miners the damaged articles they will have none of in Bilbao, and you make them pay more for them than they would in the city."

"Those are all lies spread by the socialists at their meetings," screamed the foreman, reddening with

anger as he remembered what the workmen said at their assemblies.

"You take advantage of their misery, Tocino. The poor miners are not free to buy the bread they eat. You take away the work in the quarry from any one who does not come to buy in your shop."

"Friends are intended to help one another. What is there extraordinary about my giving work only to those who do their buying at my shop?"

"You rob the workman on what he eats as well as on his labor by always deducting something from his daily wage. And your master and protector helps you to maintain this slavery by not paying the workmen weekly, as is done in all other places, but monthly, so that, forced thus to live on credit, they are obliged to take anything you choose to give them, at any price you choose to ask."

"Come, now, that touches me," said the contractor, laughing. "Really, this Don Luis is worse than those preachers in blouses who come to make converts with their wild talk on the sea front at Gallarta. What a mercy it is you have never thought of speaking in public."

"My Lord, to none of you does it seem enough to enrich yourselves quickly with the iron of the mines, but you must still rake up a few pennies from the wages and the stomachs of your workers. The obligatory canteens belong to you and to the foremen. You go shares. By day you sweat their arms and by night their stomachs. You do wrong, very wrong. Up to now you have been saved by the great mass

of foreign workmen who come to starve and to save for a few months, enduring everything as their one wish is to get away quickly. But yearly more of these remain in the country, and you will see what will happen when through settling down here these people get to know you."

The doctor cut short the conversation, remembering his journey to Bilbao, and left the canteen after giving directions for Tocino's care. The wife and son smiled and cringed before him but followed him with angry looks, deeply offended by his blunt words.

The contractor went on his way towards his mine, Aresti turned towards Labarga, thinking of the misery of the mass of human beings scattered over the mountains. They had attempted to mutiny more than once, but the result of their complaints and of the noisy strikes ending more than once in bloodshed, had not been to greatly ameliorate their condition. The sole result had been that human life was held in a little more regard than during the first years of the mining operations. Aresti remembered his own first coming to the mines, when everyone lived almost with their weapons in their hands, as in Alaska or in the primitive days in California. There were now no longer brutes in the quarries, whip in hand, to thrash rebellious workmen in the name of the owner. The tariff for human flesh no longer existed, accidents were not now quoted at "twenty duros for one arm, forty for both legs." The workers of the district were getting together and forming a nucleus of resistance which inspired their task mas-

ters with a certain amount of fear and obtained for them some mitigation in the severity of the penalties imposed for infractions of the many company rules. Still cohesion was wanting among them owing to the constant fluctuations in their number which rose like a great tide when winter came on, carrying in its wake starvation for the wretched districts of the interior, and receded with the advent of fine weather and the return of many to their homes to gather in their harvest. The Galicians would flee to their own country as soon as a strike broke out and the civil guards appeared on the scene. They came only to earn money, and rather than take part in a clash with their employers would put up with every imaginable abuse. It was much the same with the Castilians and Leonenses; they looked on with folded arms at the struggles of their fellows who were settled in the district, thinking with the hard selfishness of rural folk that it in no way concerned them to try to change the fate of the miners, as they themselves would be so soon returning to their own holdings. In fine, farm laborers turned into miners were the inert counterpoise which prevented the rise of those who lived in the district.

The quarry was the worst enemy of the rebellious miner. In the mines with subterranean galleries where the hidden dangers of the work called for knowledge and experience, it was dangerous to change the gangs and to substitute for old hands at the work those who had not served their apprenticeship. But in the bountiful Encartaciones where the

iron formed whole mountains, the workings were under the open sky, and it was only necessary to blast the ore, to collect it and transport it, digging and breaking it up like so much soil of the fields. Hungry day laborers anxious to pick up a job were continually arriving in large bands ready and able without any difficulty whatever to take the places of any who deserted their posts in protest against the abuses they suffered. Until that immigration ceased, until this steady stream of men could be cut off, until the working population of the Encartaciones could be dammed up, it would be impossible for the miners to secure their rights.

Aresti, anxious not to meet with further delays, doubled his pace as he entered Labarga, walking straight on with bent head, so as not to notice the women who called to him. But a man barred his progress.

“One moment, Don Luis. . . .”

It was El Barbas who had abandoned his fakir-like immobility to detain the doctor.

“What is it, comrade?”

“You who are so kind, I should like you to see, now that you are up here, what these thieves do.”

With a tragic gesture he pointed towards his hut. As Aresti did not seem to understand him El Barbas showed him that the upper part of the hovel had no roof.

“They have taken away the boards, Don Luis, they want to make me go away. All those plunderers in Gallarta whom I knew when they were as I am

still, now hate me and are afraid of me. The owner of the hut does not know how to turn me out. It is just a week since they took off the roof, and the rain pours into the house just as it does into the street, but El Barbas remains firm at his post with his companion. The poor old woman weeps and wants to go away, but she knows I will give her a beating if she tries to budge. Always they have me before their eyes, and all the time they are thinking how they can get rid of me. Now, Don Luis, they have discovered a better trick, they are going to steal the soil from beneath my feet, just as they have already stolen my roof. They intend to excavate the rock beneath till the house is propped up in the air on posts to see if this will send me away. But I will not go! El Barbas will remain in his place, so that all shall hear him, so that he can throw their robberies in their teeth. I do not work, neither will I go. I wait, do you understand! I wait for the coming of the avalanche, I wait for the day when the whole mountain will go down into the plain, and I shall be able to tear off the roofs and the upper storeys from all the fine palaces that these upstarts have built, all these vermin who try to make themselves gentlemen at the cost of the poor."

El Barbas accompanied the doctor for a ways, grumbling his curses and threats against the contractors who were his more immediate enemies, and against the rich people of Bilbao, those invisible, maleficent divinities who made their power felt in the mountain but who never showed themselves ex-

cept through the medium of their managers and foremen if they worked the mines directly, or through contractors if they found this way of extracting the ore more to their advantage.

As the doctor neared Gallarta he saw coming towards him a man mounted on a white donkey so big and strong that it looked like a small mule. From his mount Aresti recognized a long way off Don Facundo, the parish priest of Gallarta. Ten years ago he had been transferred from a small village in Alava to the mining district, and now he swore that this country of the Encartaciones was the finest country in the world. "Peace, always peace, there is a living for everyone in this world," he was wont to say. And in blessed peace he lived, being a great friend of Aresti and taking as a joke all the revolutionary doctrines that the doctor expounded to the rich men of Gallarta at their famous suppers. Sometimes when the doctor, wearied of the monotony of his existence, amused himself with propagating Buddhism among the rough contractors, the priest would laugh and say, "Bah! one of Don Luis' jokes, triflings of the learned, he will get tired of it." In his opinion true religion could not diminish or suffer any damage as long as he celebrated plenty of baptisms, marriages, and burials, especially many burials.

Only a few old women attended Mass and the church was always empty, yet the people of the region were very religious. Don Facundo did not have a free minute and his white donkey was con-

tinually seen trotting along the mountain roads and bridle paths. The parish was worth more to him than many a bishopric. The poor people who never remembered the House of God, always out of their poverty found the money that would carry their relations to the grave escorted by Don Facundo's donkey and that would put them to rest in their coffins to the sound of the priest's deep voice. Some days he accompanied as many as five funerals in different and most distant corners of his parish, a matter of leagues of riding. But he was never afraid of anything as long as he could reckon on his indefatigable mount.

In front of the priest a coffin was being carried on their shoulders by four miners who were followed by an escort of women wailing and tearing their hair with the despair of gipsies. Behind them came Don Facundo mounted on his donkey, in surplice and bereta, followed on foot by his "orderly officer," as he called him, his sacristan chanting continuously. This was a most important part of the proceedings for when it came to the matter of payment the relatives complained if there had been little singing. They considered that it lent an added dignity to the occasion and moreover they enjoyed intoning the versicles from the office for the dead while the priest himself gave the time by flourishing the stick with which he urged on his steed.

A halt in the march was the only thing that made Don Facundo lose his temper. "Hurry on, my sons," he would say to the bearers, "I have still three

waiting for me today. I have work both in Galdames and in La Arboleda."

Often darkness had closed in before he had ended his task of accompanying the dead along mountain paths and clearings. Aresti remembered that one bright moonlight night, as he was returning home after a supper with several contractors in the outskirts of Galarta, he had heard a lugubrious chant that floated through the calm air like a dirge as he saw coming along a man staggering under the weight of another whom he carried on his back, wrapped in a sheet and with one dangling arm striking him at every step. Then a kind of centaur had appeared, magnified by the mystery of the night, which waved a black object like a sword while it sang without end:

"Qui dormiunt in terrae pulvere, evigilabunt . . ."

"Good evening, Don Luis," said the priest, as he had recognized the doctor. "This one will be the eighth today. He is a poor fellow who has died of smallpox and so I left him for the last . . . don't say after this that the Church does not work!"

And in the silence of the moonlit night the mournful canticles taken up again, had come to him for many minutes as the priest and his solitary companion went on their way to the cemetery.

The one thing that angered him was that anyone should speak of the size of the parish, and the difficulty of one man alone serving it. "No, *carape!* I have the strength to serve God till I break up"; and this especially if the funerals were spoken of. Whenever he suspected any plan for the division of the

parish, after a sorrowful consideration of his savings, he was off at once en route to Vittoria to see the authorities of the bishopric. However, at last two curates had been placed under his orders, but these he had relegated to the minor duties of the church, reserving the interments for himself.

The astonishing fortunes made in the mines had tempted Don Facundo's avarice, and he also had his contracts and often went on his donkey from a funeral to the mines to see how the men were working. In spite of his having acknowledged in a moment of weakness that he had amassed some forty thousand duros, he regretted the olden times when he and Don Luis had first arrived at the mines when everyone lived as he pleased without interference of bishops or authorities of any kind. He hated the aerial tramways, the inclined planes and all the new fangled means of transport. He was sorry that the good old times were gone when all the carting was done by oxen and there were guards on the road to regulate the traffic. In Gallarta alone over a thousand of these slow heavy loads moved every day and if then less ore was exported, at least its price was higher and the money was distributed amongst more people. It was at this time that the priest began to build his church and found a patron saint in St. Anthony. The doctor still laughed as he remembered the extreme candor with which the priest justified his choice. "It could not be any other, St. Anthony is the patron of animals, and there are so many oxen in Gallarta."

When Don Facundo recognised the doctor, he pulled in his mount.

"Going to the mine, eh?" inquired Don Luis.

"Yes, Señor. I have just said my little Mass and now until dinner time I am going for a bit to see what those fellows are doing. Yes, I know it is a festival according to Holy Mother Church, and rich people ought to keep it. But look how those poor people work in the quarries. I am not going to deprive my poor workmen of a day's wages after so many days when they have been able to do nothing. Besides, I have my contracts with the mine owner. Good-bye, then. I leave you to laugh at me at your leisure." So saying he urged on his donkey, but stopped to say a last word.

"I hear they have murdered the teacher; what a pity! he was a good young fellow, serious and saving. Such is the world. And the funeral is to be this evening! Get along, Donkey!"

And he moved off, beaming, happy in the knowledge that more work had fallen to him.

After his long morning's work, as Aresti entered his house he was greeted by the angry voice of Katalina, "Wherever have you been to? Your breakfast has been cold for hours and you will never catch the train."

CHAPTER II

MORE than six months had passed since Doctor Aresti had gone down into Bilbao, so that as the train from Ortuella to Portugalete drew up at the Desierto station the magnificent panorama of the river impressed him afresh with wonder, much as it did the country folk who came down from their farm houses or lonely villages only when some very important business summoned them to the city.

The train left behind it the twin towers of the blast furnaces, which proclaimed his powerful cousin's industrial activity—"Sanchez Morueta's feudal castles," as the doctor called them—and after passing through a tunnel it ran along the river banks beside wharfs piled high with ore. Those belonging to foreign companies were green, their sides covered with sward like the glacis of a modern fort while those of native ownership were an ugly red, the mineral debris of which they were composed all scored with the heavy rains. "Typical," thought the doctor, "of the minds of these owners that they are incapable of relieving with the slightest adornment the ugliness of their output."

On the river, close to the always busy cranes, steamers were moored, their hulls invisible and only

their masts and funnels showing above the quays. These were unloading English coal, and taking on native ore in its place. In every direction trolleys full of iron were being tipped into ships which floated flags of every nationality from their poops, and bore strange and unpronounceable names in large letters on their sides.

From one side of the train all the dizzy movement of the river with its shipping and factories could be seen, while from the other was a view of peaceful country fields with peasants slowly and laboriously turning over the heavy clay soil and barefooted women with their skirts tucked up behind them bent over the furrows. Groups of other women were busy washing clothes and spreading them to dry on the banks of the crimson streams, the usual color of all the water around Bilbao, for the mineral washings dyed even the current of the Nervion. Aresti, as he gazed out of his train window, remembered the pure crystal streams of pastoral days, and his heart ached at the sufferings of the miners whose misery was such that they actually preferred to those clear invigorating mountain waters this muddy liquid of the washings which by clogging their stomachs seemed to stay their hunger.

As the train neared Bilbao it stopped at several stations on the left bank, Luchano, Zorroza and Olaveaga which had now spread out even to the opposite shore. Numberless tugs were moving up and down the estuary towing strings of barges, small coasting vessels were tacking carefully for fear of

the sand banks, and steamers were gliding slowly alongside of the quays. Above the forest of brick and iron chimneys hung modern Bilbao's everlasting canopy, the veil in which she enshrouds herself as though wishing modestly to hide her greatness, the multi-colored smokes of her factories, now black, like thick wool, now white and gilded by the sunlight, here thin and blue like village smoke, there a fierce yellow sparkling with mineral cinders. The cloud of smoke, the sign of commercial activity, was a characteristic note repeated all through the Bilbaon landscape, in the mountain valleys along the mineral railways, rising along either bank of the river behind the trains from Portugalete and Las Arenas, floating above the funnels of the harbor craft and the revolving machinery of the cranes.

Aresti looked upon all this activity as though for the first time. "Bilbao is certainly a wonderful place," said he to himself with pride, "one must confess that these people have done a great deal. More's the pity they are worth so little when you take them away from their business!"

The train was now passing by the dry docks in which he could see huge steamers high and dry, their hulls being scraped and freshly painted by armies of workmen. In the background soared the famous peak of Banderos with its deserted castle, recalling Espartero's heroic Christmas Eve battle of Luchano, called the *Noche Buena*, the miracle of the Golden Legend of Liberalism. Still that battle lived in men's

memories, magnified now to fantastic proportions by tradition.

A little closer among the hills on the left bank lay the University of Deusto, the abode of the Jesuits, the true masters of Bilbao. It consisted of three enormous blocks of buildings each surmounted by an architrave. At its back stretched a beautiful park with woodlands reaching up the mountain on the top of which was a large dairy farm. In the centre of the park on a slight eminence the Jesuits had placed a statue of St. Joseph surrounded by a semicircle of electric lights, so that while the good fathers slept the luminous semicircle would remind the villages on the river bank and Bilbao itself that the powerful and domineering order was there, always ready for action, never abdicating nor hiding itself even in the darkness of the night. It was a sight which never failed to irritate the doctor.

Then came the high buildings of the suburbs, the advance guard of a continually overflowing and ever advancing population, and the river's banks covered with warehouses, workshops, cranes and mountains of coal, which left the train scarcely room to pass. Endless streams of women like swarms of ants could be seen passing and repassing up and down the gangways between the ships and the quays, with baskets on their heads and blackened faces, loading or unloading coal or the salt cod which they piled in great heaps to be afterwards distributed throughout the Peninsula as the principal food of the poor.

The train stopped at last near the bridge del Arenal, where all the hurry and bustle of the population seemed to be concentrated. On one side lay new Bilbao, the suburb with its wide straight streets bordered by young trees, its seven-storied houses and squares of geometrical regularity. On the other side of the bridge lay the old-fashioned Bilbao of the sons of the country before the advent of strangers. There lay the famous "seven streets," the nucleus of the ancient town with its old churches, and the steady stay-at-home trade of early days with its modest fortunes. In the suburb rose the absurd gothic of the Jesuit's church, with its Residence adjoining and close around it, in straight rows, the mansions and houses of the new capitalists who almost in a night had grown fabulously rich from the treasures of the mines.

It was now eleven o'clock as Aresti passing in front of St. Nicholas Church went in search of his cousin. The powerful Sanchez Morueta, the Hermit of Las Arenas, as he was called, lived at Las Arenas in the suburbs both to avoid the importunity and annoyance of protégés and hangers-on in Bilbao, and because, with his English habits, he liked the country. Every morning as fast as his fine horses could bring him he drove in to Bilbao, where once arrived he would dash from his carriage into his office to avoid the unfortunate crowd waiting to waylay him at the door with proposals for wild-cat schemes or to beg a loan.

When in his office it was almost impossible to get at him through the crowd of clerks and attendants

who guarded his door. On leaving it was the same thing over again. Sanchez Morueta never ventured to appear on the street unless he knew his carriage was waiting and there were those who declared that this carriage had only one seat so that its owner could be assured of solitude on his drives. Months would pass without anyone entering his private office except some confidential messenger or one of his head clerks. Even with the other capitalists in Bilbao, many of them companions of his youth who had travelled side by side with him on their first stage to fortune, his communications were all by telephone.

Turning from the quay the doctor passed into the Sendeja where his cousin's office was situated in a fine lordly old house of dark stone ornamented by wrought iron balconies and gilt balls, with a large coat of arms covering the space between the first and second floor. It belonged to a devout old lady, who gratified her vanity by letting it to the richest man in Bilbao but who refused to sell it to him as she intended leaving all her property to the Church.

Aresti did not venture to go straight up to his cousin's office, fearing some new doorman and the coming and going and consultations of clerks before he would be finally recognized and admitted. He therefore turned into a room on the ground floor, the shipping office of the firm, which was under the direction of an old friend of the family, Captain Matias Iriondo.

"Is the Capi in?" asked Aresti of a clerk working behind a glass partition.

"Come in! Planeta, come in!" in a shout came from behind a door at the end of a passage.

Aresti went in, while the *Capi*, as he was called, rose from his desk and came towards him with open arms.

"I knew it was you, Luisillo, only by the sound of your voice," said the old man in a loud and discordant voice, the voice of a man made hoarse by years of shouting above the howling of the winds and roaring of the waves. "But see here, Planeta, I think you are ageing a bit."

It was delightful to hear the affectionate ring in his voice as he called the doctor by his nickname, "Planeta."

"Ah, Planeta," he continued, still clasping the doctor in his arms, "it is at least six months since I have seen you. And are you as mad as ever? Tell me true, always collecting books and learning all sorts of things and deriving no profit from them? I would bet a good deal that you have not saved a thousand duros!"

He laughed as he spoke, with affectionate pity for his beloved Planeta, whom he considered as being in a perpetual childhood, a turbulent child that had to be humored.

Aresti looked at him no less affectionately.

"I don't think, Capi, you either are as young as you used to be. The sea has tried you."

"You are right," said Iriondo sadly, "if only I could go every day up into the hills with my gun and shoot small game. But I have to start off five or

six ships a week, your cousin wants to swallow up the whole world, and we all work like niggers here. And we are getting old, Luisillo. You forget I am the same age as Pepé, and that I was already a pilot when you were playing in your uncle's garden in Olaveaga."

Aresti admired the captain's vigor. He was about fifty years of age, short, muscular and strong. His eyes, which always looked straight at one, beamed with kindness from a face full bearded and tanned a deep bronze. He had sailed every sea, in every sort of ship, and had rubbed shoulders with people of every land. On his retirement his early friendship with Sanchez Morueta had procured him an appointment on shore.

"I am delighted to see you," said Iriondo, resuming his place at the writing table. "How often I have thought of going up to the mines to spend a day there! Is there still any shooting there? Ah! Planeta, how delighted Pepé will be to see you, but it is four days since I have spoken with him. You know his ways, he comes and goes, and when he wants anything he tells me from upstairs by that tube. He is a good fellow Pepé, but the less one speaks to him the better he is pleased. You are his sole weakness, you and Fernandito, that fine little engineer he has up at the big foundry. How often Pepé thinks of you! Only the other day, speaking of you and your eccentricities I heard him say, 'that youngster, that youngster—he ought to be by my side.'"

"And now Capi, how is my cousin the holy Doña Cristina? Has she yet established a community of friars in their house at Las Arenas?"

The Captain's smile vanished, and a shadow of uneasiness passed over his honest eyes. He could not conceal his disquiet.

"I don't know. I seldom see her. I suppose she is the same as ever . . ."

Then he added with sudden determination:

"Look here, Luis, everyone must act as seems best to him. I stick to my ships and beyond them nothing concerns me."

There was a long silence between the two, as though the reference to Sanchez Morueta's wife had raised an obstacle between them, a barrier which halted their words and checked their thoughts. Aresti arose to go up to his cousin's office.

"Not by the main staircase," said the Captain, "go up here, up this little staircase, you will get there quicker. Till we meet again. I also am of the party. Pepé has invited me and he will drive us out in his carriage. If you have no appetite, you have still time to get up one—we shall not dine before two at the earliest."

The doctor mounted a small staircase which rising under a glass roof and running across a courtyard put the ground floor in communication with the chief's office. Upstairs the offices were far more luxuriantly furnished than below. The walls were enamelled white, the tables and chairs of dark red wood were bright and shiny as were also the bindings

of the big account books. The rooms were fitted with electric lights and clocks, and plans of the mines and views of factories adorned the walls.

After waiting a moment Aresti entered the private office which was spoken of in Bilbao as a mysterious laboratory where Sanchez Morueta made bars of gold by the mere concentration of thought.

The first thing the doctor perceived was an outstretched hand, an enormous hairy hand, but a fine well-shaped one; a strong hand, that would have seemed in proportion had it belonged to an even larger body, though Aresti's cousin was so tall that he towered head and shoulders above him. That head, so well known to all the town, was closely cropped, with a broad forehead and calm eyes that shone with a clear cold light. A patriarchal beard reaching half way down his breast served to soften the salient cheek bones and the strong prominent jaw. The beard was only slightly grizzled and although his hair was grey yet he seemed surrounded by a halo of youth, of calm strength, of quiet and steadfast energy.

Like all men whose thoughts and actions are always on the alert he was sparing of words.

He held the doctor's hand which seemed lost in his own, pressing it slightly for a moment. This extraordinary manifestation of feeling on his part being over, he turned once more to his secretary who stood by the table arranging papers and telegrams.

"Sit down, Luis," he said, as though giving an order. "I shall have finished directly."

He turned his back, forgetting him completely, while the secretary smiled fawningly at his principal's cousin, saluting him with almost reverential bows. Aresti had known that little man for a great many years; he had begun as a clerk in the house and was now Sanchez Morueta's confidential employé in everything. The captain called him "Doña Cristina's pet dog" on account of the protection accorded him by that great lady and the absolute devotion with which he requited it. Aresti despised him, for the obsequious greeting given to him, he well knew, was because of his relationship to the great master of the establishment.

Aresti looked around the room. It was plainly but richly furnished, a well stuffed sofa, a large writing table and a dozen large and comfortable leather chairs, an iron box in one corner, and in another an ancient Biscayan carved chest; on the walls models in relief of some of the principal steamers belonging to the firm and a large photograph of "The Morning Star," the three-masted yacht that was moored for half the year in the bay of Aaxe. A small bookcase of English books, nautical catalogues and treatises on minerals and metallurgy, and on the mantel a few specimens of polished rails, pieces of smelting and steel from the large foundry completed the furnishing of the room.

Then he turned his attention to his cousin, and once again admired his hands, those unique hands which seemed gifted with a life and thought apart and which went instinctively without hesitation to find

whatever the master's will required. At last the powerful talons swept all the papers together with one movement, showing that the work was ended, and the great man's eyes intimated to his secretary that he might withdraw into the next room.

"One moment, Don José," said the little man. "Would you allow me to remind you of Doña Cristina's message, as the doctor happens to be here?"

Sanchez Morueta did not remember, so the little man bent forward and spoke a few words in his ear.

The millionaire seemed in doubt for a moment as he looked at his cousin.

"It is a favor Cristina asks of you," he said at last with some hesitation. "Knowing that you were coming to-day, she wished me to beg you to go up to Begoña for a few minutes to see Don Tomas, that old priest who sometimes visits us."

And as he caught an expression of annoyance on the doctor's face he hastened to add:

"Go Luis; do me this favor. Remember that it is my name day and that we must try to satisfy the ladies. My wife and my daughter will be so pleased. It will be only a short visit. It appears the poor man is given up by everyone. What will it cost you, after all, to please them?"

There was both in his look and tone such an entreaty that Aresti silently consented, guessing that by so doing he was lifting a heavy weight off his powerful cousin's shoulders, for this man so envied by all, "fortune's favorite son," as he was called, had his troubles on his own hearth.

"Goicochea will accompany you," he said, pointing to his secretary. "Take my carriage, and by the time you return I shall have done my work." And seizing a pen he began to write, as though some sudden thought had made him completely forget his cousin.

The carriage with Aresti and Goicochea by his side passed through several of the streets of the well-remembered Bilbao with its ancient shops, and the taverns still with the green bough hung at their doors, all just as he used to see them in the days of his childhood. As they slowly climbed the steep hill to Begoña and the rows of houses came to an end, the view opened out showing the green fields and groves of oaks stretching up between the mountains. Goicochea, not naturally a silent man and one who thought he would be wanting in respect to his master's cousin if he held his tongue, spoke with enthusiasm of the locality.

"I enjoy coming up here, Señor Doctor, it reminds me of the days of my youth, the famous days of the siege. You were a child then and cannot remember it."

Encouraged by the doctor's enquiring look he went on.

"You see where we have just passed the prison? Well, there, more or less, was the line between besieged and besiegers. We shot at each other quite close, we could see each others' faces—and at nights the sentinels on either side gossiped amicably together, exchanging cigars and offering each other

lights—to kill each other next morning if possible.”

“Probably you were one of the volunteers like my cousin Pepé,” said Aresti—“one of those who defended the town.”

Goicochea fairly bounded in his seat at this, but he soon recovered his equanimity and answered with his humble smile, “Good Heavens! No, Señor, I was with the others, I was sergeant of a Biscayan regiment and was in charge of the accounts. Childish things, Don Luis, follies. One was light-headed in those days, and I had not then the eight children that are now eating me out of house and home.”

And then as if he wished the doctor to know clearly his point of view he continued:

“Do not imagine that I now laugh at those adventures. To think, they nearly buried me at Somorrostro, thanks to a stray bullet! I am no longer a Carlist now, neither are the majority of those who like me then risked their skins.”

“What are you then?”

“What can we be, Don Luis? Do you not know? Nationalists, Biskaitarras, adherents of the cause of the Lordship of Biscay, that Biscay should once more be what it used to be with its blessed liberties and all its religion, a great deal of religion. Who has brought to this country this pest of liberty with all its impieties? The people from the other side of the Ebro, the ‘marketos’, the Spaniards and other foreigners. Don Carlos is now nothing but a ‘make-to’, just as liberal as those who reign at present, and

besides there are the scandals of his life, so unbecoming in a Catholic. That is how I look upon it, Don Luis. Let the 'Maketania' keep its own people, who are without religion and without virtue, and leave free the honored and noble Bizkaya—with a big B, eh! a very big B—and spelt with a K, for the Spaniards would rob us of everything, even laying their hands on our name, by spelling it in a different way."

The carriage was rolling along the height of Begoña, the street seemed wrapped in monastic calm. On either side rose huge, recently constructed buildings, they were convents inhabited by friars of ancient orders, and by nuns of more modern foundations. The piety of the rich ladies of the city had raised these palaces and a great part of the wealth made in the mines went to rest there.

Goicochea now told the doctor about the illness of Don Tomas, the priest they were going to visit, "a holy man" who in former days was the confessor of Sanchez Morueta's wife, and who would soon die like a just man if the Virgin did not save him by a miracle.

Aresti, led by his guide, entered the priest's house. He found him motionless in an armchair, dismayed and trembling at the approach of death. When the old man recognized the doctor, with whom he had often had discussions in Sanchez Morueta's house, his face showed some signs of hope.

The Doctor must see whether he could not save him with that boasted science he had praised so often

in arguments with him! He could not sleep, he could not lie down; he was suffocating. Aresti recognized at once the gravity of his case, it was his heart, which was beyond all cure. Aresti tried to encourage the sick man with hopeful words, but the old man, whose senses were sharpened by fear, guessed the truth.

"The same as all the others!" . . . he wailed. "Ay! Virgin of Begoña! . . . Virgin of Begoña-a-a!"

The despairing way in which he called on the Virgin betrayed how eagerly he hung on to life, clutching hold of the very last hope, imploring a miracle, cherishing the illusion that in his favor all the laws of existence would be broken and upset.

Finding themselves once more in the square, Goicochea looked at the Church and uncovered himself as though it distressed him to return to the city without saluting the image of the Virgin.

"We might enter for a moment, don't you think so, Don Luis? We have time to spare. You undoubtedly have never seen the Virgin since she has been crowned Lady of Biscay? She is very beautiful. Let us enter, and I will pray a little for that unhappy Don Tomas."

Aresti let himself be persuaded. He had not been in that church since he was a child, and he was interested to see the great improvement the rich people in the city below had effected in the building which had been turned into a fortress during the wars and into which now flowed all the feelings of this country so hostile to Spanish nationality and progress.

They entered by a side door, and while Goicochea advanced reverently towards the High Altar, with contrite devotion throwing himself on his knees before the Virgin, Aresti wandered about the church. The fittings and the altars at once attracted his attention. They were all specimens of that woodwork in the worst possible Parisian taste from the Faubourg St. Sulpice, which is placed at the service of the faithful by tradesmen who fit up oratories for fashionable ladies, just as their fellow tradesmen would fit up a bedroom or a boudoir. The artistic taste of the Jesuits clashed sadly with the sober Gothic architecture of the church and with the fine severe stalls free of ornamentation.

The doctor was especially interested in the ex votos hung on the wall, simple and crude paintings representing tempestuous waves and dismasted ships on the point of sinking, all with a ray of light descending from the clouds straight to the foundering hulls. As works of art they provoked laughter, but Aresti looked on them with respect, seeing in them the record of a drama lived by hundreds of Biscayan sailors, offerings of gratitude of Biscayan crews to the image of Begoña for having saved them from fearful tempests.

When Goicochea had ended his prayer, he came towards the doctor to point out the beauties of the place as though it belonged to him.

"Look at her," he said, pointing to the image. "How beautiful she is! and how well the crown suits her!"

Aresti looked at the image, the "Biskayan fetish," as he called her at the supper parties of his friends in Gallarta; he thought her grotesquely ugly, like all the famous Spanish images that work miracles. The babyish face seemed crushed by the high globe-like crown, a stiff mantle covered with every imaginable precious stone descended to her feet; diamonds, pearls and emeralds showered in handfuls by devotion, spread out also over the little child the Virgin held out between her hands.

"What a quantity of jewels, eh?" murmured Goicochea enthusiastically. "Such a sight can be seen only in this country. Here there is both religion and wealth."

Instinctively the doctor thought of the filthy and suffering rabble in the mines, wondering how much their misery had contributed to these useless presents, placed by the faith and ostentation of a few on a piece of carved wood.

"If you had only seen the act of coronation," continued Goicochea in awe. "I still shiver with enthusiasm as I recall it. It was enough to make one weep. Fourteen bishops assisted at it and there were fifteen days of processions from Bilbao and the surrounding villages. The whole of Biscay must have passed through here. Processions of ladies, processions of servants, processions of workmen, the parish churches en masse headed by their priests, and sermons in the open air by Jesuit Fathers, admirable sermons in Biscayan, explaining to us the real significance of the Virgin's coronation as The

Lady of Biscay. You understand?—Lady! Up to now Biscay has had only Lords. Even God is for us ‘Jaungoi Coa,’ which means ‘The Lord from on high.’ All that stuff about Kings and Queens belongs to the ‘Maketos.’ From the day of the coronation of the Virgin we have morally settled our accounts with those who live beyond the Ebro, separating ourselves from them for ever. The whole thing was really most moving, organized as it was by the principal people of the party. But let us be going, we are annoying others by talking here.”

Goicochea left the church hurriedly, followed by the angry looks of several old country women who were kneeling before the Virgin.

In the porch he broke out again.

“Have you ever seen any miracles? Does not all this soften you?”

“Yes,” said Aresti, gravely, “I am touched by the piety of those seamen who come here barefooted, bringing their thanks and remembrance to the Virgin, after having been nearly wrecked. Faith is a great thing. This same thing that happened to them happens every day to English, Swedish or American sailors who are Protestants, or nothing at all, and yet they are saved though they have no Virgin of Begoña to appeal to. Besides, how are you going to know the number of Biscayans who have been drowned after imploring the Virgin’s protection, for these have not been able to come back and report.”

The secretary started with astonishment, looking with utter horror at the doctor.

"Don Luis," he said in his softest tone, "do not begin any of your jests. Remember we are not in the mines but in the porch of the Virgin's house, and she will punish."

"I do not laugh at faith," said Aresti, "man is naturally a coward before pain or any danger beyond his own strength. I remember a man named Petersen, an English engineer employed in the mines, an ardent Protestant who lost no opportunity of laughing at the idolatry of the Catholics and their worship of images. One day a dismissed workman gave him a fatal dagger stab. When he became convinced that we could not save him, he broke into tears and exclamations to the Virgin, just like Don Tomas. He clutched at the same faith as the most ignorant women in the village, calling on the Virgin of Begoña in a voice that could be heard as far as the street."

"And she came to save him?" cried Goicochea, breathlessly, in the hope of a miracle.

"No, he died in a few hours, just as though he had called on no one at all."

Goicochea, fearing fresh impieties from the doctor, changed the conversation.

"What a lovely view," said he, pointing to the river with the mountains beyond, "what an amount of mineral is loaded up here—what wealth!" Then he added in a more confidential tone, "when I see how immensely our country has prospered, I understand it would be impossible to return to fresh adventures.

To-day a third civil war, or a siege like the last would be the ruin of Biscay. What would become of the foundries and factories and all the railroads? For this reason we have more or less deserted our ancient banners. We have no need of politics to worship God. We become daily more intransigent in every thing touching the sacrosanct religion; but to fight for kings! Here we have nothing but Biscay and her most Holy Lady. It is the same thing to us whether Juan or Pedro reigns; what concerns us is Biscay and God. And God, you know, comes above either country or king."

As Aresti smiled derisively, the little man seemed slightly intimidated.

"Go on, Señor Goicochea," said the doctor, "all this interests me, for when all is said and done I am a Biscayan, though I have not the honor of being a Nationalist. And how are we going to bring it about, that Bizcay (with a big B) shall emancipate herself from the odious *Maketania*? You must remember, that these foreigners have their *guiris*,¹ their red trousered *ches*,¹ quite as ready to shoot now as in former days." As Aresti uttered these words he mimicked the tone of contempt in which he had heard many like Goicochea speak of the Spanish soldiers who were called *ches* in Bilbao, as many who had composed the garrison during the siege had been Valencians.

"It will be done without war. It is only a question of time, Don Luis, and of good guidance. Either

¹ Biscayan names for Spanish soldiers—*Translator's note.*

we will impose all our good old customs and the beliefs of our ancestors on Spain, or we will isolate ourselves like many in America who live happily governed by the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They are the ones to direct; they are the people who know how to do it. There the future is being prepared."

As he spoke he pointed towards the river, as if through the intervening heights his imagination could see the University of Deusto, which for him was the sanctuary of all human wisdom.

"That will take some time, Señor Goicochea," said the doctor, as they emerged from the porch in search of the carriage.

"I do not say no, Don Luis—our redemption is made somewhat difficult by the never ceasing immigration of people who bring with them all the bad habits of Spain. The worst of it is that they come here to work and to make their fortunes. They are intruders who take the noble ancestral Biscay by assault. Possibly, too, they are in the majority, for in Bilbao one has to search with a candle now-a-days for old Biscayan names. All have Spanish names, and less Biscayan is spoken here than in Madrid. This is one of the great evils that prosperity has brought us. But things will turn out all right. I think of what the fathers of Deusto relate about Garcia Moreno, that Governor of Ecuador who they say was the greatest statesman of the age. Do you know what he said after receiving the dagger thrust that killed him? 'God never dies.' And I say the same thing, God never dies, neither will Biscay die.

Because of the love she bears His most holy Mother she is the daughter of His predilection."

He was silent for the rest of the journey, seeming intimidated by the doctor's quizzical expression. He recognized in Aresti a worthy cousin of Sanchez Morueta, for in spite of his outward servility, the secretary had a secret antipathy to his principal, a man who lived apart from religion and let months pass by without ever hearing mass. He knew the deep annoyance this caused the good Doña Cristina who only by taking advantage of her daughter's influence over her father could persuade him to accompany them now and again to church. What two dreadful men! It seemed impossible that they should belong to the Biscayan country, that land of so many saints!

Two o'clock in the afternoon saw Aresti once more in the carriage on the way to Las Arenas with his cousin and Captain Iriondo. Goicochea, who had also been invited to the family dinner, had started earlier in the street car.

"Do you never rest," said the doctor to his cousin, "do you go every day from Las Arenas to Bilbao?"

"Every day. When I built the house I thought I should spend whole months looking at the sea, without troubling about business. But now in the mornings I wander about from place to place not knowing what to do, and I end by having the horses harnessed—in the evenings it is different, I spend quiet hours in the garden, listening to Pépita playing the piano."

"Ah! family life! You are happy!" exclaimed the doctor.

His cousin looked at him with questioning eyes, as though he felt some irony in the words.

"Yes, family life," he said. "That is what I love best. It is a pity that in this Bilbao one cannot enjoy it at one's ease. You know that well enough, Luis."

He stopped speaking, while the doctor silently bent his head, plunged in painful reflections. The carriage was passing by the showy houses of the Campo del Volatin where all the aristocracy of the town dwelt, then came the iron railings and the steps of the University of Deusto on one side of the street and on the other hand the river winding amid the wharfs and anchored ships.

As the carriage reached Olaveaga the three men broke their silence, each of them animated by a sudden joy, for this was their true country, all three had been born there.

Aresti could see the past at a glance. He could see, as though he were still before his eyes, old Juan Sanchez, the father of Sanchez Morueta, the lowly founder of the present prosperity. He was not a native of the place but had come from a village on the coast near Santander. He had come to Olaveaga as a lighterman and had married a girl of the country who had a few fields in the Vega of Deusto which supplies Bilbao with vegetables and flowers.

It was a hard life, the woman in the gardens, and he on the estuary which at that time, and with its bends and sand banks and the frequent freshets which

turned it into a torrent, was as full of dangers as the open sea. Ships anchored at the mouth of the river and only experienced men could navigate up to the town the lighters with their loads of salt cod and wood. The lightermen who were thus the intermediaries of all trade, prospered rapidly and Olaveaga was soon the richest village on the Nervion. The Señor Juan served all the largest houses, such was their confidence in his skill. He had never damaged any goods entrusted to his charge by running on to shoals or sandbanks; he knew every inch of the water, and if it were a matter of salvaging any sunken lighter he was the first person called in. And so he gathered up a fortune for his only son who in the course of time became the famous Sanchez Morueta.

The honest lighterman, satisfied with what fate had given him, being now master of most of the barges that worked up and down the Nervion, and with his savings, sure of the future, divided his affections between his little son and a much younger nephew none other than Aresti, the son of his wife's sister. The child's father had been drowned in a wreck on the Cantaberic coast, and had left behind him a widow with a child in her arms.

"Don't be distressed, woman," Señor Juan had said to the weeping mother, "others are worse off than you are. You have your sister and me; you shall not starve, as it seems I am going to be a rich man. And if the urchin has no father, here am I."

And so it came about that Aresti knew no father

but Señor Juan, and that the grave little Sanchez Morueta was to him as a brother, watching over him with a tenderness and care that surprised all the neighborhood.

Time brought great changes in the family, Juan's wife had died and young Sanchez after sailing with Iriondo had become tired of a seafaring life and had found employment in a Biscayan house in London.

At this time had begun the working of the mines and the Nervion had to be dredged and turned into a port so that steamers could enter it. That meant the end for the lightermen and so Señor Juan, giving up his once so profitable business, retired on a fortune which was the admiration of his neighbors, and devoted himself henceforth to the care of little Luis.

"He is the very devil of a lad!" he would say to his old friends on the river. "Where did he get this talent? Who would have thought the poor pilot of Berneo could have such a son?"

When Aresti was about fourteen the time came for him to decide upon a profession. The old man talked it over with him. What did he wish to be? Let him speak frankly. There was he, Juan, with his purse open ready to pay for any career that he should choose—even if he wished to be the Holy Pontiff himself. A sailor? No, one in the family had been enough. A doctor? Did he wish to be a doctor? The old lighterman had dreamed of something much grander, without knowing exactly what. Very well! . . . here goes for medicine! And, as the thing had to be done, it was best to do it well; he would send

him to study in Madrid. He did not mind the expense—for it flattered his vanity to think that in course of time in all Olaveaga the descendants of those who had known him barefooted and ragged would trust their lives to his nephew whom they would respectfully address as “Señor Doctor.”

While Luis was studying for his profession, the great transformation of the family fortune occurred, that wild turn of the wheel that dragged Sanchez Morueta out of obscurity. The son of the lighter-man reappeared suddenly in Olaveaga, come to conquer fortune; he knew where it was hidden, and was there before anyone else, putting to good use his studies and observations in foreign lands. The inventor of Bessemer steel who had revolutionized metallurgy, required iron without phosphorus and there was no iron like that of the mines of Bilbao to meet this demand.

A period of wild speculation would soon begin in those mountains, a period of rapidly made fortunes, and the first to begin would be rich as a prince. Money . . . it was money he wanted, which in a short time would return all and more that was put up. The old man hardly understood his son, but he had faith in him, he had always respected his serious ways and his ability to think things out, and he now entrusted all his savings to him, even to selling the fine new house he had built himself in Olaveaga.

The history of Sanchez Morueta's power dated from this time. It was like the transformation in a fairy tale, the strokes of good luck, the fabulous

speculations, all tumbling over one another in their breathless hurry to enrich this man who watched millions pouring upon him without the slightest change in his impassive face. He very soon obtained possession and ownership of the mountain. Wherever the metal lay, he laid his acquisitive hand, saying "this is mine." He bought up mines, to sell them the following month to Englishmen who came after him; he had steamers by the dozen in the harbor loading up that red rock which was like gold. While others slept, he had seen clearly; by the time others began to awaken, he was already a millionaire. An army of engineers, contractors and belated seekers of fortune came behind the successful man; but they were always behind, it was he who was always first.

"Your cousin is mad," wrote Señor Juan to his nephew. "It is marvellous, the millions pour into the house like a flood. Now he talks of building his own fleet to carry this ore to England, he wants to establish foundries on the Nervion, make rails, whole bridges, cannons, men of war—and Heaven only knows what follies besides! Believe me, Luis, it is too much, it cannot last."

Señor Juan and Luis' mother, surrounded by an army of servants and parasites, now lived in one of the finest houses in Bilbao, a life of plenty and of bustle, which made the two old people think sadly of the dear old market gardens at Olaveaga so quiet and smiling as they lay sheltered by the mountains with the river gliding in front of them looking like a mirror on sunny days.

The now powerful prince of industry had married that he might maintain with due dignity the position in which his large fortune had put him. His wife was a lady of the house of Durango and the old lighterman was filled with a respect bordering on fear as he considered the social position of his daughter-in-law. She was a relative of one of the partners of the firm for which Sanchez Morueta had worked in London. Her noble family were living narrowly on the small rents of some farms, a country nobility, whose coat of arms dated back to the almost fabulous times of Juan Zuria, the Biscayan Cid. Dazzled by the splendid fortune of the lighterman's son, they had consented to become related to him. Almost from the day following their wedding, Sanchez Morueta had resumed his active life of frequent business journeys and of long days in his office. The wife, Cristina, a fair-haired beauty, cold and hard of character, left the two old people to vegetate timidly in the house as though they were upper servants while she divided her time between the churches and visits to the principal families of Bilbao. The satisfaction of fairly overwhelming others with her luxury, the pleasure of provoking the envy of all her friends by her wealth, were the only joys she found in her married life.

When Aresti was on the point of finishing his studies Señor Juan died. The old man left this world terrified at his son's fortune, believing him crazed, foreseeing some terrible reverse from fickle fortune and repeating continually "It can not last,

it can not last." When Luis arrived in Bilbao he found his cousin in his full glory; a grave, strong, silent man, insensible alike to misfortune or success. A slight reddening of the eyelids and the vehemence with which he pressed his cousin to his breast were the only signs of emotion he showed at his father's death.

"Luis," he said, as though his words were gold and not to be wasted, "go on with your profession, afterwards you shall go abroad. Study. Do not hesitate at the cost. The old man is not dead. If formerly I was your brother, now I am your father."

Aresti lived for three years in Paris as a student in the Latin Quarter. He practiced in the hospitals by the side of the most celebrated surgeons of the day and the reputation of his success reached Bilbao even before his return. When he came back his career was assured, his prestige being partly due to his skill in operating, and partly to the fact that he was a cousin of Sanchez Morueta.

Meanwhile his cousin had realized all his wildest dreams, he had a fleet of ships upon the seas, smelting furnaces close to the river, nearly all the mineral in Biscay was monopolized by him. The money flowing into his hands seemed to have overwhelmed him, to have intoxicated him.

Aresti's mother had died while he was in Paris, she had languished like her brother-in-law in that terrifying atmosphere of grandeur. The young doctor having no other relations than his cousin installed himself in his house where he was cordially welcomed

by Cristina who had now a little daughter to keep her busy at home. He spent whole evenings telling her about Paris, that sinful city, against which all the preachers inveighed and of which she had only had a glimpse during her hurried wedding trip. Of all her husband's family, Aresti was the only one who had awakened any sympathy in her. Sanchez Morueta was often absent from Bilbao and even when home she saw him only in the evenings when, though he listened to her with his eyes fixed upon her, it was plain to see his thoughts were very very far away.

Cristina frowned and seemed annoyed only when some irreligious expression escaped the doctor, or when he would thoughtlessly laugh at the devoutness of the ladies of the city and at the preachers whom their enthusiasm made the fashion. These were echoes, according to Cristina, of his residence in a wicked country where people thought little of God. Could he not study and become a learned man like so many Jesuit fathers, without leaving religion out of his life? He must steady himself and clarify his thoughts, and for this there was nothing better than matrimony. She would undertake his marriage, and with the pertinacity of a woman wearied with her own prosperity and in want of occupation, she devoted herself to proposing to Luis all the marriageable young women of her acquaintance, enumerating all their merits to the accompaniment of the doctor's laughter and protests.

One day she announced with great decision that

no one would suit him as well as the little Lizamendi. Her mother was a widow with two daughters—a most Christian family, related to Cristina and to all the best people in Bilbao. They were rich, although not now as rich as in former days since the father had spent much during the war, half ruining himself in the great cause like all the other good families in the country. And Cristina by her expression gave him to understand the insurmountable difference which still existed in her mind between the ancient aristocracy, defenders of the old traditions, and the new one, the child of fortune, to which she has deigned to descend.

Aresti was quite besieged by his cousin's wife. The youngest Lizamendi did not seem to him a bad sort on the whole. The mother smilingly fell in with Cristina's plan, and the doctor met the Lizamendis with alarming frequency in her drawing-room. He finally ended by yielding to his cousin's advice which appeared to be supported by the silence of Sanchez Morueta. If he had to marry, the Lizamendi connection was not a bad one. He had often dreamed of a quiet family life, a life devoted to study and to the exercise of his profession, of seeing on his return home smiling lips waiting to kiss him, of soft arms that would surprise him with a sudden caress as he leant over his book. He understood plainly enough that Antonieta Lizamendi was an insignificant girl, educated like most of the girls of her class with the feelings of a nun; with no wider outlook than the tittle tattle of their coteries and the daily visits to

the churches. But he would awaken that sleeping soul, he would mould it to his own image and likeness. Unhappy doctor! !

Aresti smiled bitterly as he remembered that period of his past, laughing aloud at his own optimism. He to change his wife! He to transform her! . . . It was he who had been nearly wiped out; he who had almost disappeared, flattened out by the slow and monotonous grinding of the colorless life of those dead souls.

They were married, and Aresti moved to his wife's house. The mother did not wish to part from her daughter and besides, as she said, the family required the support of a man to give it greater importance. The young doctor thought in all good faith that he was in love with his wife. Breaking through the Biscayan custom he accompanied her everywhere, and made every effort to vivify the conjugal affection, to fuse himself morally with that doll who had been delivered over to him, and who having once fulfilled her conjugal duties, wished to return to the life of visits, novenas and communions of her girlhood. The mother and the other sister were a perpetual obstacle behind which the wife hid herself. By degrees Aresti found himself pushed into a new world which was not at all to his taste. The fame of his operations increased daily and the family disposed of him as of some kind of luxury which gave it a certain distinction. If there was a nun seriously ill in any convent, or if a Jesuit father complained of the state of his health, the Lizamendi sent Luis

there with directions which were in fact orders, happy at being able to assist gratuitously the elected of the Lord. The rationalist doctor soon found himself turned by his family into a convent trotter to cure people who insulted his science after taking advantage of it, and who lost no opportunity of thanking him by casting his want of religion in his teeth. Whither had gone his illusions of devoting himself to study and of becoming a scientist? Where was that loving and enthusiastic woman who was to help him by her gentleness in his thorny investigations?

At the end of two years of married life Aresti came to the conviction that his wife did not love him and, with some consolation, that she could never love anyone. The only aspirations of her life were the Church, confession to the last fashionable father, fine clothes to excite envy among her friends and visiting those friends—in all of which he had no part other than that of the male who should devote himself to business and bring money to the house. Aresti could guess by his wife's words and her eyes the outside influences that were being brought to bear upon her. In his home alone with Antonietta, he could feel the presence of invisible phantoms spying on him, taking note of his actions, interposing between his wife and himself at any display of passion on his part.

"Why are you always reading?" enquired the young woman now and again. "Ah! those books! how I should delight to burn them!"

Frequently she threw in his face his want of reli-

gion and listened with a smile of pity as he spoke of his scientific interests, thinking the while of fragments of the sermons she had heard preached against that same vicious and disturbing science. The other two women of the family did not wound him less in joining with his wife to shatter his illusions. He felt lonely, more lonely even than when he lived in Paris in his little student's room.

The difference of origin between him and his new family was accentuated if he attempted at times a feeble protest. He was appalled as he recognized the moral separation existing between himself and his wife.

"We are as we are," she said to him haughtily on one occasion. "Each one is as he has been brought up. One suffers enough living with people who belong to another class."

The mother and sister went even further.

"We belong to the Lizamendi. And who are you? A brat from Olaveaga, reared in the barges on the river."

And with a proud gesture they seemed to open an abyss between themselves and the doctor which could never be bridged, and which condemned him to eternal separation from those whom he wished to consider as his family.

How often, thinking to caress a woman, he had kissed a cold statue, who tolerated him with the rigidity of an automaton. Her religious obligations followed him even into his bed chamber. "Leave me alone, Luis," said his wife to him. "I communicate

to-morrow at the Daughters of Mary, and I must examine my conscience." At other times it would be Lent and the fast would extend even to conjugal life. Aresti confessed it bitterly to himself, that his wife was not his own, that he must share her with directors of her conscience whom he scarcely knew. At times in moments of anger Antonieta would speak with a frankness which astounded the doctor. "I am your wife and I will be faithful to you, as our Holy Mother Church commands, though I confess I love you little. . . . Ah Luis! How I could love you if you would throw away all those books, and go to church like all other decent people."

He very often noticed in his study the disappearance of reviews and books that were probably in the hands of some enquiring confessor who was spying on his actions. But what made him thoroughly lose his temper was the insolence with which his mother and sister-in-law rebuked him, supported by his wife's hostile silence, if he ventured to resist.

"After all, who are you?" they said one day. "A poor creature who though you do earn a little are mainly supported by us. When you were starving in the lighterman's hut we were far richer than we are to-day. You are no use whatever except to devour impious books, and to utter philosophic blasphemies against God and religion. If at least you knew how to make money like your cousin Sanchez Morueta!"

Aresti could endure no more—what was he doing among such people? However long a time should

pass, however long he maintained his resigned submission, he could never fuse with his new family.

It was then that he begged his cousin to send him as doctor to the mines. So packing up his books which were his only fortune, he left that house the same as he had entered it. The same? No! He had sacrificed his future; he had suffered two years of bitter humiliations; he could no longer legally unite his destiny to that of any other woman in a society governed by laws far more than by affections. He left behind him also the three Lizamendi ladies, who in order to explain the doctor's flight, spoke of his coarseness of character and of his moral perversity, the result of impious doctrines.

After this flight Sanchez Morueta's wife broke off almost all relations with the doctor. She spoke indignantly of him to her husband. How could he leave in this way poor Antonieta who was an angel, a model of virtue and devotion, like all the women of the family! To force his wife to restrain herself before the doctor, Sanchez Morueta was obliged with that grave authority of his which admitted of no reply, to declare his intention of continuing to receive Aresti in his home. But the old friendship between the two was ended, and Aresti, in exile in the mines, avoided going down into Bilbao, knowing that his wife frequently visited at his cousin's house.

When Sanchez Morueta left the city to go and live in his big house at Las Arenas, Aresti went to see him oftener. He was interested in his little cousin Pepita who had just left school and who was nearly

grown up, but in those flying visits he always encountered the coldness, the implacable hostility, though courteous enough to all appearance, of the mother, who as she advanced in years was acquiring in Bilbao a reputation for her religious enthusiasm. She was now called somewhat ironically "the great Christian" and she was always the first in all religious associations and pious foundations, pouring with full hands Sanchez Morueta's money into confraternities and convents.

Aresti having arrived at this point in his reflections fixed his gaze on his cousin seated beside him in the carriage. Ah! neither was he happy. Good luck waited every day for him at his door to accompany him out into the world, but she never followed him inside to his hearth. He had not been obliged to break with his family for his money gave him an irresistible position sheltering him from all humiliations, because with a handful of his wealth scattered without haggling, he could succeed daily in warding off the enemy with whom he was obliged to make common life. But he felt himself isolated, the bitterness of his solitude could be seen in his sad absorbed expression, as well as in the momentary joy he showed on seeing his cousin, the only person who ever succeeded in softening the hardness of his heart and in gaining his confidence.

They were now approaching Las Arenas. On the shore opposite, the towers of Sanchez Morueta's blast furnaces rose, their numerous chimneys crowned with multi-colored smoke. Below in the extensive

sheds could be seen the swarming thousands of workers. The breeze wafted towards them the clangor of the factories, the pounding of the powerful hammers, the throbbing of the machinery, the roaring of the steel foundries throwing their showers of sparks and cinders high above the roofs.

Aresti looked in admiration upon all this vast industrial activity—all his cousin's work.

"How splendid!" he said, nudging the millionaire with his elbow and pointing to the foundries. "And to think that when you were little you ran about among the urchins in Olaveaga. You ought to be satisfied with your work. Is there anyone happier than you?"

For an instant Sanchez Morueta turned on his cousin fiercely, as though he suspected he was laughing at him. Then he said slowly:

"Yes—I am not dissatisfied with fate. Everything has prospered for us, Luis. I am surrounded with happiness; but it is all on the outside, in what can be seen. . . . But inside, at home, each one of us must bear his own burden."

CHAPTER III

THE dinner party that was given by Sanchez Morueta on his Saint's day was an intimate family party. There were no ladies present in the dining-room save the millionaire's wife and daughter. The guests all belonged to the firm, as Captain Iriondo, the secretary Goicochea and Fernando Sanabre, the directing engineer of the blast furnaces, or else they were relations like Doctor Aresti and Fermin Urquiola.

This Urquiola was a frequent visitor at the house as he was a distant cousin of its mistress, although Sanchez Morueta never showed any great liking for him. He was an old student from Deusto, who after leaving the University, remained as much under the rule of the fathers of the Company as when he was a pupil in their halls. The youth of Bilbao which considered itself the elite of the town, admired him for his bodily strength and for the enthusiasm with which he supported the sound ideas of the good fathers. He was the organizer and the working member of all the pious associations. His ideal was to keep the liberals well in check and not to allow the people of the "Maketania" to gain control of the country. He passed in Bilbao as being one of the

most fashionable young men of the city, but when any electioneering struggles were taking place, with his cap over his eyes and carrying an enormous cudgel, he was always to be seen at the head of the gangs of peasants from the neighboring villages. His full and curling beard, his big aquiline nose and his black gipsy eyes, gave him great prestige among the country people as he reminded them of the adored face of their idol.

"How like he is to the Lord!" they murmured. "He has quite the face of Don Carlos."

And Urquiola, impulsive and brutal, who talked of "drinking blood" for the slightest offence, was pleased that the partisans of the cause, in the excess of their enthusiasm, should connect his birth with some of the fickle amours of the fugitive king of the mountains. His family, ruined by the war, had left him scarcely enough to live on, so that Urquiola helped himself along by seeking the protection of the most ancient families of Bilbao who saw in him a finished example of the orthodox youth educated at Deusto. He made it a practice to add to the aggravated bitterness of all political struggles, carrying into them the same violence of word and action as when he fought in the mountains. At night he mixed in all the disreputable scandals of the suburb of San Francisco, where the legend of his birth gave him a certain superior standing. His friends believed in his future, and the fathers of Deusto protected him, smiling benevolently at what they termed his "escapades." It was only the exuberance of life, they

would marry him advantageously and he would become in good time a model among Christian gentlemen.

Sanchez Morueta saw him in his house with a good deal of annoyance, but he did not venture to show it openly out of consideration to Doña Cristina who appeared so proud of her cousin.

"No doubt that animal comes here for Pepita," said Aresti, who was interested in Urquiola as a rare example of selfishness and brutality.

He watched his little cousin, who in spite of her mother's hints showed more inclination for Sanabre, the engineer of the blast furnaces, than for her relative, whose presumption and boldness seemed to frighten her. Urquiola entertained her by telling her of all the festivals projected by the fathers of the Company to amuse and keep under their domination the wealthy and idle society people of the city, but once this theme was exhausted, she withdrew within herself and sat in silence, as though altogether overcome by the instinctive repulsion with which this distinguished pupil from Deusto inspired her.

Aresti saw in his cousin a specimen of the rich girl of the families of his country, educated first by the nuns and directed afterwards by her confessor even to the smallest acts of her existence, her will atrophied and considering the slightest attempt at initiative of her own as a sin.

The girl had the joy of youth in her eyes, her mother's golden hair, and a healthy well-developed body. She was covered with jewels, with all the lav-

ishness of a newly created aristocracy ever eager for opportunities to make a display of its luxury. Sanchez Morueta's daughter was as much courted as her father when she went to Bilbao to hear mass at the Jesuit church, or to the conferences of the Daughters of Mary in the afternoons. The young men just come out of Deusto spoke of her and her father's millions with unction, "what a magnificent mouthful"; and each one cherished the hope that the prize in the lottery of marriage might fall to him in a country where hardly any one marries for love, where marriages between the rich are affairs of vulgar negotiations, settled by the families with the help and good advice of Jesuit fathers.

The dinner proceeded pleasantly; all felt the charm of comfort and satisfaction with life in that dining-room, whose carved oak and leather panelled walls blending with the fine old wrought silver on the table gave forth an atmosphere of subdued and imposing splendor.

Aresti sat next to his cousin's wife. It was long since he had seen her so amiable; there was not the slightest allusion to the Lizamendi, not a single bitter remark about his impiety, in fact she seemed pleased at his visit to Begoña. As he looked at her the doctor discovered something almost nun-like in her appearance in spite of her being bedecked with jewels in honor of the day. Her gown was black and fashionable, but as the doctor remembered her pretensions to smartness in former days, he noted a certain carelessness in her dress now, and a slight stoutness

which marred her former fair and clear cut beauty.

"She is giving herself over to religion," thought the doctor, "she reeks of incense like all the others."

The glances of all the guests were directed toward the doctor. He was an original who awoke their interest, living as he did like a hermit in the mountains in the midst of that mining population the very thought of whom was disquieting in that rich and well appointed house. All looked on Aresti as upon a traveller recently returned from a voyage of exploration through savage and mysterious countries where life was rough and dangerous. Many of them thought of the mines as of some distant land, whose only use was to enrich the potentates of the city, a land to which men went as seldom as possible and whence they returned as quickly as they could.

Urquiola harangued the doctor with his wonted self confidence, as though he were in his café or in the Society of San Luis Gonzaga surrounded by the pious and elegant youth who looked on him as their captain. He was no enemy of the people, not he. The Church was always on the side of the lowly, and the Holy Father had written encyclical upon encyclical on behalf of the workmen. But the people for him meant the country people in the fields, the villagers who were respectful both to their priest and their Lord. Give him the worthy people of the Biscayan parochial churches, who were religious and of sound principles, who had no other amusement beyond dancing the *aurreasca* on Sundays. There you had men who lived happily in their appointed con-

dition, never dreaming of the division of wealth or of revolutions but ever ready to pour out their blood for God and Holy customs. Do not speak to him of that rabble in the mines, corrupted workmen without faith, men from every province, an invasion of *maketos*, bringing with them all the worst habits in Spain, people who by their vices contaminated the purity of the country, always discontented and threatening strikes, longing to exterminate all the rich, and for ever comparing their misery with the comfort of others, as though even in heaven ranks and classes did not exist.

Encouraged by the grateful glances of his cousin who was filled with admiration of his burning words, the zealous disciple of Deusto continued.

"My people know not how to read, neither do they know anything about liberty or rights or such like tomfooleries, and therefore they are happy. Those hordes in the mines who hold their meetings every Sunday are desperadoes who long to come down some day to Bilbao and pillage us all, never suspecting that we should receive them with lead."

Aresti turned towards his cousin who was eating in silence and only now and then glancing at his wife's cousin.

"What do you think, Pepé, of the young people's way of thinking?"

Then facing Urquiola, with gentle irony yet showing plainly his wish to avoid an argument with him, the doctor said, "And yet, those rascals come from Spain; this wicked rabble of '*maketos*' are those who

work and bring prosperity to Bilbao. They wear out their bodies in the mines, they produce the mineral, and without mineral what would this country be? We, the natives of this country, we do nothing but watch their work and take advantage of the privilege of having been born here before they came. They are driven here by poverty, and now that we can no longer gratefully repay their services with the lash, we repay them with hard words."

Urquiola's wrath rose against the doctor's contemptuous words; he abominated those lost people who were incapable of regeneration; the proof of it was that they never saved, that they never made the slightest effort to raise themselves from their present state.

"Save!" cried Aresti, "save and grow rich on a few reals a day, living surrounded by people of their own class, who rob them both in their food and lodging!" . . .

"That, no," interrupted Sanchez Morueta, authoritatively. "You know, Luis, that I do not agree with your ideas. The Spanish workman is the victim of improvidence. In other countries it is different; the workman saves a little capital for his old age."

"Bah! it is just the same in other countries as here. What makes the modern workman rebel and give himself over to class hatred is the conviction that however much he tries to save, sacrificing even his actual necessities, he will never get out of his misery. Progress has barred the way to him. In the

former days of hand work, of home industries, he could perhaps dream of becoming a master ; he might possibly out of his savings buy the necessary tools and turn his house into a little workshop. But now, Pepé, however much one of your workmen saves, laying by peseta by peseta, would he ever become a shareholder in your foundries? Could he ever acquire a portion of the mines, with all the material necessary for working it?"

"That is capital," cried Urquiola, triumphantly. "Really, the doctor sometimes tells us very opportune things. What he proves is that the old times were the good ones, and that for the peace of everyone we must return to the days when there was no progress and men lived in peace."

Sanchez Morueta turned on the young man with eyes that alarmed Doña Cristina.

"That is ridiculous," he said with calm gravity, "that can only be said by one coming out of Deusto. It is absurd to suppress progress because it carries in its train a few complications."

The usually silent man spoke slowly but with great energy. He was a fervent believer in capital ; Aresti knew his great confidence in the power of wealth, which put into circulation by industrial discoveries, had revolutionized the world. It was certain that labor, which was capital's indispensable auxiliary, would go through crises and suffer misfortunes. But were they for this reason to go back on progress, the legitimate child of industrial capitalism? The great

modern revolution was the result of devotion to wealth. By utilizing the discoveries of science, products have been multiplied and their cost diminished, thus putting them within the reach of the majority and increasing their comfort. The workman of the present day enjoyed commodities that even the rich had not known in former days. All the great ones of the earth had to bend and humiliate themselves before capital and in their difficulties had to beg from the capitalists hidden in their offices. Behind victorious kingdoms, the true masters who changed the face of the world stood hidden, the great republic of capitalists, silent, humble to all appearance and yet masters of the world's fate. But what delighted Sanchez Morueta more than anything in this universally powerful class was that it was only by capacity a man could enter it. The son of a capitalist who was wanting in capacity was very soon thrust out by his own business incompetence. Where could you anywhere find so great and powerful an institution at the same time so democratic and modest? And yet there were madmen who cried out for the death or the modification of a power which had transformed the world.

Aresti protested. He quite recognized the greatness of capitalist rule and the social advantages that it had given humanity with the assistance of labor. Capital always found its services remunerated by a large return on its investment; but labor—were its efforts equally rewarded? Was it not in the same

condition of poverty to-day as at the beginning of the great industrial revolution in the early part of the nineteenth century?

"That is a mistake, Luis," replied Sanchez Morueta. "Labor is better off now than ever before. The proof is that throughout the world the interest on capital is lower, while with strikes and workmen's demonstrations the average of wages goes up."

"Bah!" said the doctor with a gesture of contempt, "the increase of a few reals in the wages! Remedies for the moment, poultices which do the sick man no good, for in a very short time the fatal equilibrium is re-established by the increased price of provisions, and the workman, though he has more money in his hand, is as badly off as before. It is only a change of position by which you try to deceive the sick man. The alms of an increase of wages is of no use to the workman; you know we shall never agree upon that point. What is wanted is justice, that he shall occupy the place that belongs to him, and be master of what he produces."

The words of the two men rang out in the silence of the dining-room. All kept still, not daring to interrupt them. Urquiola was the only one who smiled with self-sufficiency, as though he alone possessed the secret of the whole question.

Doña Cristina, fearing that the polemic would end by disrupting the peace of the party, intervened by asking Aresti about his friends in Gallarta, and Pepita went to her mother's support, but with no better reason than that it amused her to hear of the

eccentricities of those contractors who did not know how to employ their wealth. They all listened as the doctor, with a touch of irony, told them of the Gargantuan banquets at the mines, with the floods of champagne. Within their new and elegant homes these newly rich were no less original, still wearing the workman's cap and hempen shoes. They and their wives went down into Bilbao anxious to dazzle their neighbors with a parade of their wealth, buying everything that was most extravagant and gaudy, everything that the warehouses and shops had been unable to sell, such as intricate and weird pieces of furniture which soon got covered with mineral dust and which their owners did not dare to clean for fear of doing damage to the polish. Whenever the doctor wished to wash his hands upon a visit in one of these houses he was astonished at the towels of every color of the rainbow that were provided for him and at the tablets of soap in the shape of tigers or lizards that might have been made for an African chief.

The owners of these strange mansions would delight in the doctor's surprise, accepting it as a tribute of silent admiration. Some of them, as a reminder of their past, kept as their greatest treasure a skin of wine underneath their beds, thus fulfilling the most cherished desire of their days of poverty. "Do try it, Doctor, it is the best in all Rioja," they would urge, telling him how much they had paid for it. Many covered their hands and breasts with precious stones which they cared for with an almost super-

stitious tenderness, as if they were delicate little creatures that would vanish at a touch. Never did they dare to shave themselves, as they declared their beards would scratch the jewels and dim their brightness. Betting was the strongest passion and keenest pleasure of these rich men shut up in the mountains. The trials of young bulls and the competitions between blast drillers caused enormous sums to change hands. Here was the worship of strength, the adoration of brutality, with all the delights added of a game of chance.

In the mines there were many men so expert in the management of the drills that they enjoyed amongst themselves the same prestige as a great torero or a famous pelota player. In Gallarta there was a strong young fellow who won all the bets, whom the contractors took to their suppers, looking after him with the care and tenderness they might bestow on a fighting cock, feeling his muscles to judge if his strength was decreasing, stuffing him at all hours with champagne and delicacies. They sent challenges to the other towns in Biscay and even in Guipuzcoa, carrying their favorite off with them to compete with the strongest men of these other places. Bets of fabulous size were made. They would watch for whole hours the panting of their idol boring the stone with his drill and when he came off victorious against his opponent they would toss their caps in the air with shouts of triumph, more from the pride of class than because of the bets they had won.

Nothing came amiss to them that gave them an

opportunity of risking the money that fortune had poured so lavishly on them. For their wagers they took advantage as well of the voracity of hunting dogs as of the strength of men. Some weeks ago several thousands of duros had changed hands in consequence of a bet which still made the doctor laugh. Bets were made on which would be capable of swallowing the greater quantity of a porridge-like milk soup of the district, the thin and insatiable coursing greyhounds belonging to one of the contractors, or another contractor's blasters, powerful young fellows from Castile with bottomless stomachs who never thought the proper time had arrived for them to rise from table. Everyone in the neighborhood who was not working attended to watch the spectacle. Bank notes were laid by the handful as though they were merely bundles of valueless paper; some on the dogs, others on the men. And all the while, above in the quarries, blasts were exploding and the miserable gang of workmen up there were hewing at the red rock with their picks.

"The milk soup was served in basins," continued Aresti. "The greyhounds swallowed theirs at once, it was just like throwing bits of paper into a basket. The men ate slowly, without showing any hurry, and so they went on for hours."

"And which won?" asked several of the guests at the same time, interested in the stupid bet.

"Who should win? The men of course. One of the men who bet on them told me with tough philosophy. 'I was quite sure of my men; when an animal's

appetite is satisfied he will not eat any more; but a man, given the pride of a contest, will go on eating till he bursts.' And he was not mistaken. Two of them gave me plenty of work but in a few days the priest of Gallarta riding on his white donkey accompanied them chanting to the cemetery."

In spite of this dismal ending, Sanchez Morueta's guests laughed at what seemed to them a very diverting amusement these rich barbarians had thought up.

It was far on in the afternoon before the dinner was over. Captain Iriondo, after drinking the health of his friend and principal, took his leave, saying he had to see to a ship that was loading; the secretary Goicochea left with him to give a last look at the office; and the ladies went into an adjoining room accompanied by Urquiola and the engineer Sanabre.

They were expecting some friends from Bilbao later and in the meanwhile they would have a little music if Pepita would sing for the young men some of the ancient Biscayan songs, so sweet and melancholy.

Sanchez Morueta, his cheeks flushed by his dinner, lighted a magnificent cigar and suggested going into the garden to Aresti. The evening had cleared and he wished to enjoy the last rays of the sun amid the shrubbery and trees surrounding the house. The millionaire showed his pleasure at being alone with the doctor, the only friend in whom he had any real confidence, and placed one of his large hands affectionately upon his shoulder. It was the first time during the whole day that he had been at his ease,

far now from business worries and through with the banquet with whose guests he had been absent minded and silent.

His affection for his cousin whom he saw so seldom inclined him to confidences and he looked at Aresti with kind and questioning eyes as though at the slightest encouragement from him he would speak.

"Now then, unburden your heart," said the doctor cheerfully. "You know that I am your confessor and that if you are silent with others, it is because you are storing up words for me. What is the matter with you? Here is the physician of your soul, as one of those priestly friends of your wife's would say."

Sanchez Morueta gave a shrug of his shoulders; nothing out of the ordinary was the matter with him; he was simply weary of his isolation, the only happy moments he had were when he saw his cousin. How often had he felt impelled to take the train to go and pay him a visit in the mines. But he was so busy! Besides, he was almost afraid of that mining property, where everyone would ask something from him! In Bilbao he felt so alone, doomed to the slavery of wealth, to watch and regulate the influx of that stream of money, which poured into his doors without ever mistaking its course. He was bored from lack of hopes and aspirations, bored with the weariness of a man who hopes for nothing, the saddest of all boredoms.

He had longed and suffered like all who struggle for an ideal, he had known what it was to fight tooth and nail with fortune. He had succeeded as do cele-

brated politicians or great artists who begin their careers from the bottom, knowing the bitterness of poverty and continually coasting danger. But those others, however much they might think they had attained their ends, were in fact always looking on to something beyond, their hopes were always fixed on the dreams of tomorrow; with anxiety, they puzzled over the next day's political combinations, or on artistic work shaping itself in their brain. But for him . . . for him . . . everything was accomplished. All the ambitions of his life were realized. He had longed to be owner of the mines, and now the greater part of them were his, giving him a fabulous return with the regularity of a perennial spring. Why should he wish for more? If he established new factories, in a short time they worked of themselves with a heart-rending regularity. If he built ships, not one of them was wrecked, to alter the monotony of his existence by the catastrophe. Misfortune seemed impotent for him, he was invulnerable; even if she came to clasp him in her arms, the mortal embrace would be only an insignificant caress.

If any ship by rare chance should be lost it was always insured. If any strike momentarily closed his factories, his capital would not for this suffer any great diminution; if the mines in Bilbao became exhausted, he had many others in different parts of Spain waiting to be worked. He was a prisoner to his own good fortune. He lived behind golden bars, in the loneliness of a well fed bird, which sees the open sky where hungry birds it is unable to join are

flying. He was fond of the sea and kept his yacht, a floating palace, almost at his door, but as soon as he started on a trip he was sure of a summons home by business. He was fond of family life and the solitude of the ocean, of smoking and reading, just as the bustle of noisy ports wearied him. His wife detested travelling and as for his daughter, with an instinctive aversion to those rough and busy towns where she and her father passed quite unnoticed, no life to her was better than that she lived among her friends in Bilbao among whom she was always recognized as the leader.

He was many times a millionaire and the slave of his own handiwork. With his titanic arms he had raised around him the strong tower of his wealth and now, held within it, he struggled, unable to find room to stretch himself and rest.

He hoped for nothing. Even if he neglected his business the money would continue flowing in, as if it were unable to flow in any other channel. If Fortune should turn her back on him it would be too late now for him to feel the bitterness of her fickleness. He was so rich, he had risen so high, that he was sheltered from all anxiety.

"I am weary of life, Luis," said he. "I am consumed with sadness—without hope, without illusions, the sadness of good fortune."

Looking around him his eyes rested on his magnificent dwelling, on the walks through the garden with their fine trees and flower beds in which the early flowers were beginning to blossom, and beyond

on the winter garden whose glass roof shone like gold in the setting sun.

Aresti thought of the miserable and suffering people in the mines. Ah! if only those men who cheat their stomachs with muddy water, not having beans enough to fill them with, could hear the powerful Sanchez Morueta complaining in the midst of his life's opulence!

"Then," said the doctor, "you are unhappy because you want nothing, because you possess everything that men think they want to make them happy?"

Sanchez Morueta shook his head sadly. Yes, he possessed everything which apparently gives happiness, and for that reason he could tell his trouble to no one, for fear they should think him mad. Only to his cousin who knew from his profession the strange vicissitudes of life and the ways of the mind could he dare to speak.

Aresti nodded as though he had guessed a long time ago everything his cousin was telling him. But hearing his complaint at the moral solitude in which he lived he pointed to an open window in the house from which proceeded sounds of music and youthful voices.

"And that?" said he.

Sanchez Morueta shrugged his shoulders.

"What they call my palace," he murmured, "is no more to me than a boarding house. I live better there than in the wretched pension in London, where I spent my youth as a clerk; that is all."

"And your wife? and Cristina?"

"My wife!" answered Sanchez Morueta bitterly, "I have no wife. I have only a patron Saint, very holy, very virtuous, who looks after my material life, and is even a little anxious about me if I am ill. I am the lodger who brings in the money, and who receives in return a little respect. Do not pretend ignorance, Luis. You must have guessed for a long time past how we live. You with your poverty have not been more fortunate than I with my millions. You have often said, in this country we have heard tell of someone called Love, but he has never passed this way."

He revealed the secret of his married life without a blush, such was the confidence with which the man who was as his brother inspired him. He had married Cristina in the early dawn of his fortunes. Did he love her then? He was not quite sure. He had married to add another laurel to his triumphant success, because it pleased him to become related to those who had been his masters in London, and the lady, who belonged to an ancient and traditional aristocracy, completed the consideration due to his wealth. Yes—he saw now he had loved Cristina with a feeling in which love for the woman was mingled with the instinctive respect of the waterman's son for the lady who counted among her ancestors the almost fabulous Lords of Biscay. Now he could take the exact measure of his love, which during that period he had not had leisure enough to develop in the intimacy of domestic life. Ah! when he could rest, he had said to himself then, when his fortune

should be firmly established, how happy he would be with that woman, the worthy companion of his splendor, who seemed made to reign over the highest in Bilbao. But when the looked-for time of rest came and he sought his wife's affection, all his endeavors to meet her were in vain. He had beside him a good mother, a most excellent mistress of his house, somewhat extravagant in her expenditure, but a most meticulous administrator of the household, who watched her servant's accounts as minutely as when she lived on straitened means in the ruined castle of Durango, and at the same time extracted thousands of duros from his strong box to restore a chapel, so that it might be more sumptuous than the one decorated by the ladies who rubbed shoulders with her at the Daughters of Mary or in the visiting parlors of the Fathers of the Company.

When the success of his business affairs allowed him time to return to the thoughts of his youth, Sanchez Morueta suffered a severe disenchantment whenever he approached his wife with any attentions or show of love. Cristina looked at him angrily as though this display of affection were an offense. For her, conjugal love could not go beyond the cold and almost mechanical intimacy of their earliest days. She considered that marriage was intended to enable a man and woman to live together without scandal, begetting children to serve God and to prevent the family fortune from being alienated. What depraved people called love was only a repugnant sin, fit only for people without religion. A Christian

wife should be chaste in thought, careful of the bodily and moral health of her husband, advise him well, and carefully direct his household. He always ran against an impassive statue against which he shattered himself in pieces in his efforts to give it life.

At one time Sanchez Morueta thought Cristina loved another, that when she had married him for money she had left behind in her past some dreams which still followed her. But after examining her friends and intimates in the elegant and devout society that surrounded her, he had dismissed his suspicions. She loved only her husband, if such feeling as she had could be called love. Being convinced that no one would triumph over a nature so antagonistic to passion, he had gradually left his wife to her own life, without causing her the least pain or offence; she even herself assisted the separation with ill concealed satisfaction.

Time went on and she abandoned one by one the luxuries of the early years of her married life, taking her place among the city's matrons of severe respectability and in her own house she began to practice certain austerities that were almost conventual. How often had Sanchez Morueta found himself repulsed with anger because it was Lent, or because it was the Vesper of some pompous communion!

When the separation became more definitely established and he withdrew completely from her, his wife seemed to thank him by her looks and by a greater gentleness in her manner. There was no doubt that she felt more free and happy.

"She is very honorable, very virtuous," said he bitterly, "but for me, it is as though she did not exist. Ah! Luis; I am so utterly alone. I think that life ought to be something so different. Such severe chastity is insupportable."

Pepita's voice floated over the garden on the soft evening air. She was singing the melancholy Biscayan "Giozeko Izarra," the invocation to the morning star.

"And Pepita," enquired the doctor, "have you not your daughter?"

Sanchez Morueta replied warmly to this question. Yes, he loved his daughter, his love for Pepita was the only thing that preserved the appearance of peace in his household. But her future at times caused him great anxiety. He would wish to marry her for love to the man to whom she felt drawn. But he could not see in her the slightest sign of passion. She would marry whomever was selected for her by her parents, without ardor and without objection, in order to continue an insipid life of ostentation and of fashionable devotion with greater freedom. He felt sad as he watched Pepita, seeing in her an exact reproduction of her mother. If Sanchez Morueta chose a son-in-law in opposition to his wife, it was pretty certain that Pepita would not follow him. "I love her," said the father, "I love her in spite of everything. She also loves me after her own fashion, she pets and adores me, especially when her mother has asked her to wheedle something out of me, yet when I am with her I feel alone; it is as though we

did not belong to the same family, as though we belonged to a different race. I hardly know how to express myself, Luis, but at times I go almost mad. I never can feel with them that confidence, that happy ease that I feel with you, and it is because you are of my own blood, my only real relation."

Sanchez Morueta paused, it seemed as though he wished to make a full confession to his cousin. As the joy of life had not entered his house he had sought for it outside, he required love, and he loved. It was not a vulgar entanglement but a passion which softened his mature years and made him dream and feel at fifty years of age with an intensity that carried him back to his youth. With the rapture of a young man, delighting in his tale, he proceeded to tell his cousin the romance of his love.

It had begun in a common enough adventure, a meeting in Biarritz between himself and Judith, an adventuress of undecided nationality, born in France but of Jewish origin; a woman who in her early youth had roved over half the world and spoke every European language. Their relations had become closer; whenever he separated from her, ashamed of his alliance and remembering his daughter, he felt driven to her once more, and he would arrange some business call either to Madrid or Paris, wherever she happened to be—now living quietly passing as some man's wife, now possibly displaying her beauty and her fine voice at some music hall. What was there in that woman that so absolutely intoxicated him and scattered all his prejudices and all his scruples?

With her he tasted all those extravagances of love which so sweetly disturbed the weary monotony of his life, and the letters in a feminine handwriting that he found on his office desk amid his commercial correspondence seemed to bring with them a breeze charged with the popping of champagne corks and the shrill music of the café concert.

He had finally torn Judith from her adventurous life and had definitely installed her in Madrid as a quiet lady living on her own income.

Sanchez Morueta travelled frequently to Madrid for two or three days at a time, alleging meetings of shareholders, or negotiations with the government. Every one thought him rejuvenated, they saw something new and inexplicable in his eyes which shone now with the soft light of youth, something which seemed to give more alertness to his powerful frame and which made him more careful in the care of his person.

"You yourself," he said to the doctor, "have often been surprised at this change. It is love, Luis—there is nothing that renews a man like love."

As though he feared the doctor would laugh at him, he spoke of Judith enthusiastically, wishing to convince his cousin that he was not playing a ridiculous part by the side of this woman so much younger than himself. He was certain she loved him. It was not as though he could inspire a great passion, but being weary of her former life she had taken refuge in his arms for ever, loving him with a love in which gratitude entered largely. But that was enough for

him. One need only to see how she smiled at him, how her beautiful white arms met him when he arrived unexpectedly at the little house in the suburbs of Madrid. That was his true home; there he spent his happiest hours, and were it not for his daughter and for the respectability required by business, there he would go to end his days.

Moreover, an unexpected event had happened to draw them closer together and to strengthen that idyll which had now lasted for five years; but only to a man like his cousin could he make such a confidence. He had a son! And as Doctor Aresti could not conceal his astonishment at the news, he hastened to add:

"You are the only one who knows it; a son . . . Mine! My very own! A child of three just beginning to talk, who when he sees me cries "The papa from Bilbao," and who gives me the love I have so often longed for in my own house and have not found. A son! . . . He does not bear my name, I cannot confess that I am his father, but I think of him, I hope he will grow up and then when he will come to my side, I shall do what I can for him, and that will be much! He is a true love child," continued the big man smiling, "the little fellow has nothing of my ugliness, nor my big hands, nor my giant's face. He is as ruddy as gold, so white, so dainty! such a little thing, he looks like a china baby."

Sanchez Morueta stopped as though worn out by his confession. Strolling back and forth they had approached the house and now as they turned about

once more, the sound of the piano and the buzz of conversation followed them.

"To think that I might have found in my own house the happiness I now seek elsewhere, hiding myself like a malefactor!" exclaimed Sanchez Morueta, as though the remembrance of his family caused him some remorse. "But do not believe, Luis, that I in any way repent—and," he added resolutely, "I have every right to be happy, and one takes happiness where one finds it. But, in God's name, say something, Luis. What do you think of all this?"

Aresti shrugged his shoulders. About these amours he did not care to speak. If they brought his cousin a certain amount of happiness he was right to continue them. Life is sad and it is man's duty to brighten it, to illuminate the grey outline of existence with bright colors. It was a good thing if that woman loved him as he said; but even if the love did not exist, the result would be the same. The most important thing was that he should believe himself loved. In this world one lived on illusion and lies and the greatest misfortune was to open one's eyes.

"She loves me, Luis, she loves me," interrupted his cousin hastily. "Why should she pretend? If she had known who I was I might have doubted, but in the early days of our love she thought me a man of small fortune. It was a long time before she knew I was Sanchez Morueta."

The doctor was astonished at his cousin's firm conviction. He rejoiced in his optimism, in this way his happiness could run no danger. Beyond that the

doctor did not wish to mix in the affair. The only things that really interested him were his cousin's domestic misfortunes and his moral isolation in his own house. The same thing had happened to others that had happened to himself. It was the eternal obstacle against which all stumbled who wished in this country to find in their wives anything beyond a companion and housekeeper.

Aresti did not blame his countrywomen, they were as they were partly from racial coldness but much more from educational shortcomings, because the men themselves had accustomed them to isolation, to the separation of sexes and to the association of women with women only. When Sanchez Morueta married what had he done? Just the same as all the wealthy men of his country. A marriage adjusted by the families without much regard to the wishes of the contracting parties; afterwards the ostentatious tour of several months through Europe to display his wealth, the husband longing to return as soon as possible to take up his affairs. The very day of his return, he went to Bilbao to his office to make money, or to his club to be among men only, leaving his wife to her women friends. So she had taken refuge among those of her own sex, having no other amusement than calling upon them to exhibit her clothes and jewels and to excite their envy. Yet even so she found she lacked sufficient opportunities for the display of her wealth.

They knew nothing in this land of the society life of dances or evening parties of the higher classes in

other countries. The Fathers of the Company, to secure their own influence, preached against dances as inventions of the devil and worthy only of those other countries which had not had the happiness to inherit the holy and virtuous principles of Biscay. The theatres performed to empty boxes and without a single woman appearing in them. The summer religious *fiestas* were the only annual gatherings for all of them. Therefore, in want of all amusement, anxious to meet together, to hear music, or anything that could awaken their feelings, they sought in the church both their theatre and their club, spending the day in the Church of the Heart of Jesus, where the effeminate and ridiculous architecture covered with gold and vermillion, the harmonium, the soprano voices and the electric lights, seemed to caress them in an atmosphere which was as much worldly as it was mystical.

Aresti smiled bitterly. "Ay! that siege was not ill contrived, to gain possession slowly of the woman and through her means attaining at last the mastery over her husband." The chief fault lay with the men. What could these weak creatures do lacking all direction, poor things that they were, drawn by the sentimentality of their sex towards every absurdity? They lived the life of a harem, women always with women, and the clever Jesuit presented himself as a remedy for their ennui. Relieving their boredom with a sweet and effeminate religion, he became in fact their guardian, the truer master, directing his flock at his own sweet will. So out of the shadow he

was able to become possessed of the will of the men, who thereupon acted without knowing whence came the spring of their actions.

Some men seemed to be pleased and grateful to the priests as they provided innocent entertainment for their wives, leaving them greater liberty for their own business or pleasures. Idiots! The doctor was indignant at this intrusion which had ended in completely changing the women of his country, crushing their souls, turning them into automatons who abhorred as sinful all the manifestations of life, carrying out on their hearths the injunctions of an overpowering domination.

"You yourself, *Pepé*, who complain of what happens in your house," said the doctor, "what have you done to prevent it?"

Sanchez Morueta halted in astonishment. He? What could he prevent? Could he by any chance change his wife's character? . . .

"Like the others," continued the doctor, "you have allowed your wife to seek a solace to her solitude by giving herself over to devotion, and you are astonished that *Cristina* should have gone further and withdrawn herself from you! What happened to me is easily understood; I am not rich, and in this commercial country a poor man has no authority over his family. Then, too, added to the prejudices of the person who was my companion, were the reinforcements brough to bear by her mother and sister. But you who have the authority of wealth, why have you allowed them to take possession of a woman you

loved and to separate her from you? You complain that she is no longer to you as your wife, but this affection which is lacking to you, the want of which has wrecked your life, others have gained. Under your very nose they have courted your wife and stolen her from you. If at any time you should think of revenging yourself, go in search of those who confess her."

Sanchez Morueta smiled contemptuously.

"Bah! The Jesuits! Your old song! Certainly, they are people for whom I feel an aversion; and you above all, Luis, know I bear them no good will. I am a liberal, I fought in the last siege as a volunteer eating horseflesh and bean bread, and I should take up my rifle again if the Carlists returned. But do you still believe, Luis, in the legend of the sinister Jesuit, committing the very crimes that he attributes to the free-masons?"

"I believe neither in their sinister power nor in their vengeance. No one in all this country dares to speak against them as I do, and yet you see no harm happens to me. Certainly as I have put myself out of their power by leaving a house where they ruled and going to live among people who despise them, they can do nothing against me. Alone, of themselves, they are worth little enough, but they are to be feared where folly helps them, where people go out to meet them. They reckon on the powerful help of fools and on feminine sentimentality, on people who seek them out and offer themselves saying, 'Rule

us, do all that you will with us, but give us heaven in exchange.' ”

Aresti did not believe, like the enemies of the Company in former days, in the greatness and power of Jesuitism. The learning of their members was only a legend. After centuries of existence, disposing of immense wealth, spreading over all the earth, its famous men had not enriched humanity by one single important discovery. The doctor likewise laughed at their power. They could reach only those who knelt before their confessionals; the man who cut short all communication with them could fearlessly scorn them; yet the doctor recognized that to-day their power inside the church was greater than ever.

When Loyola founded his Company all the other religious orders despised it. From its youth and strength it had taken possession of all of them, and the friars having lost their ancient wealth were now obliged to follow the lead of the Jesuits in order to make money. The fourth vow, that of obedience to the Pope, peculiar to the Company had made the support of Jesuitism indispensable to the Vatican; it might even be affirmed that the monastic army of Iñigo Loyola had saved the Pontificate in the crucial moment so dangerous for it of the Lutheran reformation. The Company had saved the Papacy but had enslaved it for ever. Now, catholicism was no more than a name, the true religion was Jesuitism. The Pope who blesses remains in the Vatican, but the Pope who decrees and who disciplines conscience, is

the General, concealed in the Jesu in Rome. "Personally this does not concern me much," Aresti ended, "I live outside the fold and it is the same thing to me if this one directs or the other."

His cousin made a gesture of assent—neither did it concern him.

"But you, you," said Aresti energetically, "it ought to concern you. You think you live outside this influence because you do not go to mass or have any intercourse with priests. But everything comes about in time, you will go over, and it is even possible you will kneel before some confessional in the Jesuits' church. You are within the circle of their influence, they have you within reach of their hand by means of your family and they will seize upon you. The millionaire Sanchez Morueta would hardly be a bad mouthful!"

At this Sanchez Morueta smiled, "Bah! They are not so terrible as all that. In England they would laugh hearing them speak seriously of such people; there they despise them, if indeed they ever remember them."

"But is Bilbao London?" exclaimed the doctor exasperated. "Possibly Spain is England. I know that all powerful modern nations save France laugh at them, but here you cannot so much as move without running against them."

"Yes; here they dominate," agreed Sanchez Morueta gravely. "I know that in the case of others less powerful than myself who have required the support of outside capital for their business, some they

have assisted and raised up, while others they have sunk, by sending to them or withholding shareholders as they saw fit. They certainly thrust themselves into houses and direct them, but it is only where they are allowed to enter. I fortunately, though you believe the contrary, am free from them. They have sought me in a thousand ways; they have endeavoured to ensnare me, and they have indirectly offered me that assistance that I did not require. I am too far above them, for them to do me any harm. They shall not enter here however much they try. Cristina knows it; it is the only thing that would induce me to break with her, to separate from her, without fear of what people might say. You who smile at and even ridicule us, tell me, have you at any time seen a cassock here? Have you ever heard that any of those gentlemen from the Residencia visit us?"

"No, they do not come," said Aresti without dropping his tone of irony, "why should they trouble to come? They have been inside for a long while past, they do not require your permission. Whom should they come to seek in your house? Would it be your wife and daughter? Nay, you save them that trouble by sending them yourself where the fathers wait for them. You lock the door of your house on them, but instead you . . ."

"You have told me the same thing very often, but these are all delusions on your part. You know my character. I have said they shall not enter, therefore they will not enter. It would be a fine coup on

their part to gain possession of Sanchez Morueta; but they would lose their time in the attempt."

Aresti was thoughtful and did not seem to hear him.

"The other day," he said slowly, as though he were fixing his memory on something, "I read a play in French and I thought of you. It was 'The Intruder' of Maeterlinck, do you know it?"

Sanchez Morueta shook his head, he had no time for reading.

"The Intruder," continued the doctor, "is Death, who enters houses without any one seeing him, but all feel the effect of his presence."

And Aresti related the gloomy scene of a family assembled around a table, in the dusk, beyond the radius of the light of a lamp with a green shade. In the bed hard by lays a sick man, unconscious; in the distance outside the house can be heard the whetting of a scythe, piercing the still night air with its rasping. Some one must have entered the garden. They go to the window, but see no one. The swans are cowering frightened, hiding their heads under their wings as though some danger were passing. The fish in the fountain basin hide themselves scared, the flowers cast their petals, the gravel scrunches as though crushed by footsteps of immense weight . . . yet they can see no one. Now steps are heard on the stairs, the door opens though there is not a breath of wind. Even the night seems to have become overcast and silent. The family try to close the door but they cannot, it is as though they met with some invisible

but resisting body, waiting undecided before finding his way in. And then the mysterious being advances into the room. No one can see it but they can divine its footsteps on the carpet and all can feel that something passes between them and the green lamp shade. An invisible hand raises the curtain of the sick man's bed and lets it fall again though no one has entered.

A groan! The sick man has just died. It is Death who has come up to his room, passing through all obstacles, the Intruder, for whom there are no doors, who comes invisibly, but who makes his hidden presence felt all around.

When he had entered Aresti looked silently at his cousin, who did not seem to understand him.

"The same thing is happening in your house," he continued after a long pause. "You think this enemy has not entered, because you do not see him in flesh and blood sitting at your table and filling an armchair in your drawing-room during visiting hours. But a long time ago he entered in, even to your bedchamber. You complained of him a short time ago. Every day he returns following the footsteps of your wife and daughter as they come back from the Jesuits' Church or the meetings at the Daughters of Mary. Do you not feel the proximity of this invisible enemy? Do you not perceive the rustle of his robes. The lowest of your servants feels it, but you are blind. He watches you at all hours and knows all your actions, his eyes are that secretary of yours, and that cousin of Cristina's who wishes to become more nearly related to you, think-

ing more of your millions than of Pepita. They will seize you when you feel yourself weak, they will take advantage of a moment of discouragement to push you gently into the arms of the Intruder. You think you are free of him but he prowls round about you at all hours."

Sanchez Morueta laughed aloud.

"You must be mad, Luis. I do not wonder at your having earned your reputation for eccentricity. So much reading has turned your brain. What is the good of all this about phantoms and dramas and intruders? The sum total is, that I allow my family full liberty to give themselves up to religious practices, and to this fascinating religion invented by the Jesuits. What can I do if this amuses them? Do you wish me to be like a tyrant in a play and say, 'All intercourse with the Fathers is to terminate, the only mass here is to be the one said by the priest of Portugalete in the Chapel of this house'? This I cannot do—I am too liberal, possibly more than you are." Then he spoke of his stay in England where there are so many different sects and liberty for all; where the members of the same family do not quarrel if they profess different beliefs.

Aresti was irritated by the calmness with which his cousin spoke of religious liberty.

"You cannot speak of perfect liberty in this country, which is famous throughout the world for the Inquisition and for being the birthplace of St. Ignatius. We carry on our backs four centuries of clerical tyranny. Catholic unity is not written down

in the laws, but many take very good care that it shall exist in practice. No—I am not a liberal, I am a man of my time such as the circumstances of my country have made me, a man who dreams that fire and steel are the only remedies to purge the earth of the miseries of the past.” Aresti always ironical, became excited as he spoke; latent in his words was the hatred of that hidden influence which had wrecked his life, wounding him in all his domestic affection. He loved liberty, but it must be liberty for the improvement and well-being of the human race; he could not recognize the right of existence to beliefs which were the negation of life, neither could he concede liberty to those who were the traditional enemies of that same liberty.

Facing Sanchez Morueta he asked, “What would you do if you knew there were certain men in your office who hoped for the wreck of your ships, the burning of your factories, the exhaustion of your mines, the disappearance of everything that meant the existence of your house. Would you not turn them out indignantly? Well, that is what I wish to do for these enemies of life, for those who curse as sins all the greatest delights of existence, who exalt contemplative laziness and consider work as a punishment, who make an apology for vagrancy and poverty by raising them to the perfect state, who hold hunger to be a sign of sanctity, who separate people from all the positive joys of earth, making them turn their eyes to a lying heaven, who anathematize human love as the work of the devil. They are,

in a word, those who make divine all the miseries, all the sufferings which martyrize man, branding on the other hand with the seal of their execration the only joys that are within his reach. Those enemies of life, who insult it by calling it a vale of tears, does it make them wish to leave it any sooner? We should thank them if they left the place free for the sinners, for the evil doers who love this world and adjust themselves to all its defects and sorrows, knowing that there does not exist a better one beyond."

Aresti spoke with fierce vehemence, his eyes flashing with murderous fire.

"You are an inquisitor," said his cousin smiling, "it seems incredible that a man as 'modern' as you are, should express himself in such a fashion."

Aresti did not object, his cousin's designation inspired him with no repugnance. An inquisitor? So be it, but all Spain longing for some change, thought the same as he did, the only difference was they had not as yet been able to reason out their impulses. In other more advanced countries the religious crisis, the transition from Faith to Reason had been brought about gently, amid respect and liberty. The Reformation with its spirit of criticism and free examination had served as a bridge. But in this country they would have to pass by one violent bound, without any bridge, from the beliefs of the four previous centuries to modern life. The transit could not fail to be rough and brutal. It was a dream to think of guiding the people gently, they would rush and bound and tear down everything before them. The

race must be taken into account and the gloomy inheritance weighing on the people. In a few years of modern life, which after all was not their own but a reflection, it would be impossible to extinguish centuries of religious ferocity. Every Spaniard was at heart an inquisitor. In former days the old Catholics had to produce their proofs of pure blood, to show that they were clear of all Jewish or Mahometan taint; but who to-day could swear that no blood of a friar or familiar of the Holy Office was running in his veins?

The doctor who had attended many great popular meetings remembered the gradations of feelings expressed by the crowds, how they applauded with rather forced enthusiasm, more by habit, than spontaneous impulse, any attack on the political régime. Kings were far off and the masses thought of them as a calamity belonging almost to the past, which had not yet been extinguished, but which must necessarily disappear sooner or later without any very great effort. The social question interested them as something positive in connection with their own well being, but whatever efforts the orators made to set forth the immense benefits of revolutionary sociology, the people could not see beyond the advantages of increasing their wages by a few reals, and working a few hours less. But speak of the Jesuits, the friars, the priests, and the assembly would instinctively with one impulse rise to their feet, their eyes flashing with the diabolical flame of a long repressed vengeance; the thunder of delirious applause would suddenly

break forth, threatening fists would be raised seeking the traditional enemy, the man in black, the master of Spain. In all strikes the marchers turned aside to stone the churches, all popular manifestations hissed and insulted every cassock that crossed the street, even the risings against the imposition of taxes on provisions found their final ending in the burning of some convent. "It is that the people," continued Aresti, "guess by instinct who is their nearest enemy, the first they must attack when they awaken, and they will not join together for anything without directing their anger against it. Besides there exists here an impetus of traditional strength; from the far dim days of the country's history comes a blast of holy savagery. The inquisitorial bonfire burnt for centuries, the blue sky was obscured by clouds of human smoke; kings, magnates, the populace, all assisted between sermons and hymns at the burning of men with the same enthusiasm as is now excited by a corrida of bulls. From the depths of the earth thousands of charred bodies crying for vengeance; old men whose only crime was to explain the Bible; women crazed by hysterical maladies which have since been explained by science; innocent children who in the ignorance of youth followed the beliefs of their parents! But Spain is a country of oblivion. In France people still shudder at the remembrance of the St. Bartholomew which lasted only twenty-four hours, while here it is vulgar to say there ever was an Inquisition! In other countries statues are erected to the victims of religious intolerance,

but here the omnipotent church has killed them a second time by leaving their history a blank. Of so many thousand martyrs, not even the name of one of them has come down to us.

"I again say that you must be mad," said Sanchez Morueta laughing, "but come, I see that those people are quite as noxious and dangerous as you say. You know that I have no great esteem for them, and that I deplore the state to which they have brought our country. But of what use is violence? To put an end to them there is nothing like liberty; with full liberty and great progress, you would soon see how the habits of civilization would push them into the place they ought to occupy, and from which they would not dare to emerge."

"Now you make me laugh," said Aresti looking at his cousin with pitying eyes, "How can you hope to struggle with those people in the plenitude of liberty, when they start with the advantage of four centuries of domination, the ignorance of the country, the slavery of the women, chained to them by sentimentality and ignorance; when they can reckon on the support of the rich man of traditional stolidity who, tormented by remorse, buys with a fraction of his fortune the certainty of not going to hell. . . . Besides you must watch the actions of the Fathers of the Company, who are the true representatives of Catholicism and who occupy high places. Did Barcelona rise by following the manufacturing movement in Europe? There they were to be found. Did Jerez gain its immense wealth from

the universal fame of its wines? There over the roofs of its wine vaults rose the dominating church of the Jesuits. Were mines discovered in Bilbao? At once the Ignacian appeared to claim his share, building the University and the church, the abode where eternal salvation was sold. There is not one prosperous spot on the miserable map of Spain that is not occupied by them, but in the poverty-stricken regions of the interior condemned to perpetual starvation, their existence is not known. The poor and wretched Spain can be left for the mountain priests and starvelings, for the despised camp followers of the army of faith." And Aresti ended, "They are like reeds which by the thickness of their stems betray the presence of hidden water. Wherever the Jesuits appear there, without any doubt, is wealth."

CHAPTER IV

THE office of the engineers belonging to Sanchez Morueta's Blast Furnaces occupied the second story of a recently built house, whose walls were blackened by the smoke of the chimneys which rose between it and the river. On the first floor were the offices of the clerks of the establishment, who with their pens behind their ears, kept count of the wages of the army of workmen blackened and baked by the furnaces, and added up the intricate entries of the output of minerals and coal, and of the finished steel which would be distributed all over Spain. Upstairs, as large and populous as a town, were the rooms of the technical engineers, the brain that directed the whole vast industrial establishment.

This was the only part of the building that the workmen could ever look at without anger. On pay days many of them would turn with hatred in their eyes to the windows of the first floor, thinking they might possibly see some of the managers who haggled over the payment due for their work and curtailed their wages with fines and deductions for lateness or carelessness.

And although those gentlemen who spent their days leaning over their drawing boards designing

models with minute delicacy or tabulating figures for their calculations were looked upon as superior beings, the men felt themselves more in sympathy with these whose duty it was to plan out their work than with those of the management who only paid them their money. Going down into the workshops at certain hours to give their orders to the overseers, the engineers would return to their mysterious study without a single reproof ever passing their lips.

At their head was Fernando Sanabre who had such a splendid memory that he knew all the workmen and could call each one by his name. When they saw Don Fernando in the shops their work seemed less heavy and they always managed to get through it more quickly, as though the engineer would himself profit from their efforts. The young man seemed to be surrounded by that atmosphere of sympathy and attraction which is often possessed by great leaders who sway the masses. He inspired confidence and all who had any complaints to make went to him, though they knew perfectly well that his influence did not extend to the management. After listening to his advice they would return to their jobs feeling almost that they had succeeded in obtaining what they were looking for.

The simplicity of his manners, the gentleness of his words and his ready smile, the reflection in his actions of a character at once straight-forward and transparent, incapable of double-dealing, captivated those who were used only to the sharp orders of the

bosses or the haughtiness of the clerks of the administration.

He lived like a workman in a house in the Desierto, boarding with an old woman whose husband had died working in the blast furnaces.

A great part of his salary he sent to his mother and sisters who lived in the southern town where he was born. The poor lady had tried to live with him in Bilbao but the climate had been too severe; many of the workmen remembered her as an old lady of old-fashioned distinction, with white hair combed in plain bands, who on fine days would walk out along the river supported on either side by her two daughters.

When the workmen spoke of Don Fernando they were always enthusiastic over the interest he took in them. That young fellow was quite one of themselves—and his purse was always open to help any one who from illness in his family found himself in difficulties. They knew also that he was constantly at odds with the management in defence of the men in the shops.

In the offices Goicochea had been able to make use of his intimacy with his employer to find places for a great many of his friends. They were his companions in the different confraternities in Bilbao, pious gentlemen who thought more of the workmen's views than of their work. Taking advantage of a certain spying system that had been organized in the shops, they kept the men under constant watch and had them all accurately classified.

One day the engineer had a heated discussion with the management on finding that an old workman had been dismissed on a very flimsy pretext. All his comrades remembered that about a month previously he had buried a son with civil rites, to the great scandal of the townspeople, and they accused the "vipers," as they called the managers, of having taken a despicable revenge upon the old man for his hardihood by throwing him out of his job. The more excited shouted in threatening tones "after killing ourselves with work, are we going to let them tell us what we ought to think? Shall we have to walk with a veil in the processions in order to get work, the way some of these hypocrites do?" Sanabre had a lively time of it in the offices and ended by going to Sanchez Morueta. The millionaire immersed in his business was quite ignorant of the every day details of life in his factories, and when he heard Sanabre's story he was indignant that his managers should have taken advantage of the positions in which he had placed them to impose their religious beliefs upon those under them. Did not Sanabre know that he himself wanted attention paid to but one thing in his establishments, the work performed? All the men at the furnaces congratulated the engineer on his victory when the discharged worker was returned to his place.

If Sanchez Morueta enjoyed the slightest popularity among the thousands of men who saw him passing like a phantom into the office buildings, it was only as a reflection of the affection they all felt for Fernando Sanabre, for they were quick to see the

sympathy their master felt for the engineer. While Don Fernando was by his side there was no cause to fear that the spirit of sanctimonious pretense common to other factories in Bilbao would enter their blast furnaces. The engineer looked after the master's interests, seeing to it that the work was carried on properly; but outside the workshops every man was free.

And so it came about that there developed in Sanchez Morueta an almost paternal affection for Sanabre. It was now eight years since the youngster had presented himself one morning in his office, bearing a letter of recommendation from a friend in Madrid. He had just finished his education as an industrial engineer in Barcelona, he was poor and wanted to earn money to support his mother and sisters who were living on a wretched State pension. All the men of his family had been soldiers but he did not care for that profession, he was too much like his mother for that. As Sanchez Morueta studied him he saw that the young man had very little in common with the race of warriors. He was slight, with delicately made hands, a smooth dark skin, even white teeth, and large soft eyes, maybe too large and too soft for a man. His moustache jauntily curled up seemed his sole inheritance from his military ancestors.

The millionaire felt a liking for the young man from the first, possibly it was because of the very differences between them. Sanabre, for his part, was not long in gauging his master's character; that

giant of few words was understood at once by the younger man, who often guessed his thoughts and acted on them before they were actually spoken.

When Sanchez Morueta took him under his protection the blast furnaces had just been completed and Sanabre entered the office as a supernumerary, working under the orders of an Englishman who had built the furnaces and who was an excellent director up to the noon hour when he usually became irresponsible because of too many drinks of whisky. When the Englishman returned to his own country, Sanchez Morueta looked at his young engineer with a fatherly smile, "Youngster would you dare to manage all this?" Would he dare!! . . . Sanchez Morueta soon found that with Sanabre at the head of the blast furnaces the output went on with greater regularity, and the troubles between the management and the army of workmen became less frequent.

The management, either from excess of zeal or from instinctive antipathy to the mass of workmen who lived oblivious to the calls of the Church and who were forever talking of their rights, were perpetually inventing new regulations to cut into the men's wages or to add a few minutes to their day's work.

Goicochea's protégés spoke constantly "of the necessity of watching out for the interests of the house," and at the same time of keeping in hand these workers who were daily growing more exacting and argu-

mentative. But with Sanabre there as intermediary and peacemaker, peace reigned once more as the millionaire silently accepted his engineer's opinion and the "vipers" swallowed their defeats and smiled hypocritically at Sanabre.

Latterly the workers had noticed a great change in the person and habits of their directing engineer. He dressed with more care, and those who were accustomed to see him in the shops in his cap and hempen shoes oblivious of coal dust and sparks from the steel, now felt anxious about the smart new clothes bought in Bilbao, the high collars and gay ties in which nevertheless he wandered about with all the old carelessness through the hissing forges and the black clouds of the loading.

The women especially noticed the difference and their quick instinct told them at once that love was at the root of the sudden change.

"Hey, girls! they have changed him," they called out. "He is no longer our Don Fernando, he looks like a young swell from the Arenal. Who will be the bride?"

Some evenings the workmen saw him driving towards Portugalete and crossing the suspension bridge to Las Arenas. From these excursions he often returned with a flower in his buttonhole, a token he always carefully cherished for days until it withered. Those who were on the most friendly terms with him smiled as they espied the involuntary glances he cast at this decoration as he visited their shops.

"When is the wedding to be, Don Fernando?" they enquired.

He replied with a smile, as though he wished to share his happiness with all who surrounded him. The vision of a garden and of a woman followed him everywhere through the grimy and noisy shops, embellishing everything as with the golden rays of the sun.

One summer afternoon Sanabre was writing in his office, seated by the open window which framed a pretty view of the river with its steamers and the hill on the opposite shore. He seemed uneasy, looking anxiously now and again at his subordinates. But feeling sure that none of them were watching him he returned to his writing, not however to the large sheets of foolscap that he generally used for his work, but to a small sheet of note paper which he seemed to caress with his pen as he traced his delicate letters upon it.

He had filled up more than two pages when someone knocked loudly with a stick at the office door, and a voice roused all the personnel, who were accustomed to the almost monastic quiet of that study.

"Hullo! Where is that little engineer?"

And the first thing Sanabre saw as he looked up was the flash of a pair of spectacles. Recognizing Doctor Aresti he rose from his chair, confused and undecided, hesitating whether to go and meet him or to hide the letter.

The other employés who knew the visitor vaguely

as a relative of their employer turned again to their work, while Sanabre, bewildered by the unexpected visit, offered him a chair by the window.

The doctor explained his presence. He had come down from Gallarta summoned by the wife of a former contractor who now lived in the Desierto. It was one of the inconveniences of popularity, for those good ladies even if they went to live in Bilbao or at the further ends of the earth would have no other doctor but Aresti. As he had some time to wait for the last train back to the mines, he had said to himself, "Let us go and have a chat with the little engineer, and see my cousin's great industrial fief."

Shaking hands warmly with Sanabre he added rather maliciously:

"Since Pepé's Saint's day I have not seen you. How many things have happened since then, eh! It appears that all is going on well."

The doctor's scrutinizing eyes used to taking in rapidly everything that was about him, had gone straight to the letter which Sanabre had endeavored to conceal.

"That does not look much like an engineer's work," he said in a low voice, with a mocking smile. "My nose sniffs of a certain scent of courtship. This is a fine way of watching over my cousin's interests, Master Engineer! Most certainly there are other things in those drawers besides plans and studies. A few little love letters, in a delicate English hand with a few mistakes in spelling; possibly a few dried flowers or ribbons. Very good, Master Engineer.

"All this is very appropriate to the importance of an office like this."

And he laughed, seeing Fernando's confusion and his involuntary glance at the drawers of a writing desk close by. Disconcerted at the quickness with which the doctor had guessed everything and afraid his subordinates would hear the chaffing he was undergoing, he rose, anxious to get out of the office as quickly as possible. "Have you really never seen the blast furnaces? Well, this afternoon is one of the best for there is a great smelting of mineral taking place," and he left the office followed by the doctor.

Below in the immense plain of the foundries crossed in all directions by rails and smothered in coal dust the doctor stopped his guide, as though he were more interested in talking than in seeing his cousin's mineral wealth.

"Now then, Fernandito," said he, seizing him by the buttonhole. "Now that we are alone and there is no fear of your people hearing us, how is the love-making going on?"

Sanabre crimsoned, he shook his head but was disconcerted by the doctor's eyes fixed on him with all the inquisitorial tenacity of short sightedness.

"The devil, young man! Do not deny it. Yes, I know everything. . . . So now you are found out, you had best be frank with me. Besides, the 'Capi' told me last week when he came up to the mountains to shoot, and you know he is a silent man who sees everything. Nothing escapes him that passes in

Pepé's house. So then tell me, when do you think of becoming my cousin?"

Sanabre surrendered. It was no use attempting any dissimulation with this man. Moreover the doctor had inspired him with a great confidence and he felt all a lover's desire to tell of his happiness; and to whom could he tell it better than to the kind Aresti, who was so important in his eyes as Pepita's cousin. The shamefaced reserve of the young engineer broke down and his words became an overwhelming torrent.

Ah! what an afternoon that was in the garden at Las Arenas when Pepita gave him a favorable answer! It was the only time that he ever believed himself to have been intoxicated—intoxicated with the sun, with the blue sky, with the green of the trees, and with the light of a pair of downcast eyes. It was certain that he left the house at Las Arenas scarcely knowing what he did, nor where he was . . . What a night, Doctor! Afterwards he had grown calmer; his happiness had become more restful. But even so, every day brought him new and deep emotions. When he arrived at Las Arenas he dreaded to enter Sanchez Morueta's house for fear the latter would suddenly appear pointing with an angry and commanding gesture to the door. Also they were obliged to elude Doña Cristina's vigilance in order to exchange his little notes with Pepita in some corner of the house, or at some turn in the garden. But fortunately they could count on the assistance of Nicanora, Pepita's old nurse.

The great drawback to Sanabre's happiness was the thought of the great inequality of their respective fortunes. What could his employer say when he knew of it? He would believe him to be an adventurer who wished to become possessed of his immense wealth. In that country where large fortunes generally mated, what would they think of a poor engineer who raised his eyes to Sanchez Morueta's daughter?

Fernando looked at the doctor, trying to guess what he thought. Would not he also believe he was influenced by the wish to attain wealth at one blow? This doubt saddened him. He loved Pepita . . . because he did—who knows why he loves? Possibly it may have been because in that gloomy life in Bilbao without any social intercourse, where men and women live entirely apart, Pepita was the only young girl he had met, and love, which never thinks of social differences, had surprised him. Did not the doctor believe him?

"I believe you, youngster," said Aresti, "though certainly it would not suit you badly to become a millionaire's son-in-law. But this is the honey on the leaves and in this case the leaves are your love. I am certain if this goes on I shall see you some night with a guitar singing serenades beneath my cousin's window."

In order not to vex the engineer Aresti changed his tone and spoke gravely. He must be prepared to suffer annoyances. He himself did not know how it would end, but most probably badly.

"I know it," said Sanabre sadly. "I dread Sanchez Morueta when he knows it. He will be angry and not unreasonably."

"My cousin is the least to be feared. He has no preconceived ideas as to his daughter's future. Possibly he may think it an excellent notion that you who are a worker should carry on his work. From a man of his character something good may always be expected. It is others you have to fear!"

Aresti spoke of his cousin, the "repellantly virtuous Cristina," as he called her, who thought herself degraded because she had married Sanchez Morueta, although he had brought her fortune. What was she likely to say of the possibility of becoming related to an employé of the firm? There were only two qualifications that she could look on as respectable in this world, a large fortune or an historic name connected with the ancient glories and the religion of Biscaya.

"Besides," continued the doctor, "you will have to struggle against Fermin Urquiola who I think is also after the girl, I do not know if on his own initiative or whether egged on by the mother."

Sanabre spoke with the confidence of a man who knows he is preferred. He was not afraid of that. He was sure Pepita felt an insuperable aversion to that man. It was enough to see with what coldness she treated him. Girls brought up at their mother's apron strings knew everything that went on in the town. When they were together they gossiped like novices at visiting time, full of feminine curiosity

about everything that went on outside their gratings. Pepita was well acquainted with that young gentleman's life, a mixture of clerical bully and rustic roué, who spent his nights in the houses in the San Francisco suburbs and who had often been hauled up before the justices for disorderly drunkenness. No, Pepita could not love such a man, she despised him although he persecuted her with his visits and his clumsy courtesy, copied from the Fathers of the Company. He knew that Urquiola inspired her with disgust.

"And about Pepita herself, are you quite sure of her?" enquired the doctor quietly with forced indifference, as though he did not wish to alarm the young man.

Sanabre had the blind confidence of all lovers. Yes, he was certain she loved him, why should she deceive him and flatter his illusions? The engineer did not understand the doctor's question.

"It is that you belong to different races," said he, "possibly I may be mistaken, but from here, without having read your letters or having overheard anything, I would bet something that of the two, it is you who love the most and the best."

Sanabre was silent for a moment. He seemed taken aback as though a window had opened suddenly in his thoughts through which he could see clearly. Quickly there recurred to his memory forgotten arts, words to which he had paid no attention, a thousand insignificant things seemed called up by

the doctor's words. Maybe he was right. Pepita did not seem to take to love as passionately as he did. But the longing to believe himself loved mastered Fernando's doubts.

"No, Doctor—she loves me—I have proofs."

But the proofs were only the bundle of letters lying upstairs amid sheets of plans and calculations, little notes on pink satin paper in which Pepita swore to love him "more than her life," and which invariably ended "thine until death."

"Well, if she loves you," said the doctor, "go ahead, youngster, and tell me when you are to be my cousin." Feeling a certain pity for his optimism, Aresti tried to encourage the young man, minimizing the difficulties that lay in his way. He need not fear the father in spite of his beard and his terrible frown. It was largely a question of the discovery finding him in a good humor. But some time would elapse before he would be aware of anything as he was so busy with new affairs which obliged him to go to Madrid every month. Surely he knew well enough what love was, and he was not a man to be angry with a young fellow because he had followed the dictates of his heart. But there remained other enemies and the malice of people who would consider what was really love to be only calculation.

"The worst of it is," added Aresti, recovering his tone of irony, "everything in this Bilbao is different from the rest of the world. In other countries an engineer would be considered an excellent match with

a good future, but here, my son, the fashionable hero who carries everything before him is the pupil newly come out of Deusto."

Before Sanabre could speak again of his love the doctor added, taking him by the arm,

"Come along now, show me all these works, and remember I have to get back to Gallarta."

They walked across the black and red plain, covered with coal dust and débris of red mineral. At every step they crossed rails which formed an intricate spider's web of railway lines, Sanabre enumerating all the various means of communication which turned the establishment into a complicated net work with sidings and movable platforms for shunting cars. There was one line direct to the mines, another for supplies which communicated with the neighboring station; there were lines for the loading wharfs, lines of communication from one workshop to another, making altogether many miles of rails which crossed each other in a comparatively small space. Above all this the sky was cut by lighting and telephone wires and the cables of the aerial tramways hung from hundreds of poles. Civil guards kept watch along the different lines with their carbines slung over their shoulder and a folded umbrella tucked under their arm, watching the wharfs and the banks of the river on which gangs of thieves concealed themselves in search of old steel, portions of dismantled machinery, or rolls of copper, which they sold in the marine stores in Bilbao. The river, as Captain Iriondo said, was worse than any ancient

highway, for as soon as night closed in a swarm of marauders searched the banks to carry off anything that was loose either from ships or buildings.

The engineer showed with pride the great machinery hall where coal gas, never utilized before, was used for fuel. This was his own installation and it provided the shops with two thousand horsepower at no extra cost. Afterwards they passed by the coke furnaces where pitch and ammonia were extracted.

Going on from there they came to the wharfs where coal was unloaded. A steamer moored to the bank lay so deep from the fall of the tide that there was visible only its masts and the funnels on which were painted in enormous letters the intertwined initials of Sanchez Morueta. Another steamer a little further out floating an English ensign was freighted down to its load line and was waiting its turn to discharge.

"We consume a thousand tons daily," said the engineer with pride, "we require more than a ship-load every twenty-four hours."

The great workshops for the repair of the firm's machines and for the construction of machinery, bridges, and ships, did not excite the doctor's curiosity. "I know all this," said Aresti, "I have seen it often abroad. What would interest me is the firm's specialty, the basis of your industry, the conversion of ore into steel."

He pointed to the blast furnaces, the two strong twin towers, joined by the lift which carried the loads of ore up to their mouths. As they drew near

to them the heat became like that of a volcano. They walked over platforms of fire clay marked with geometrical regularity by furrows and hollows which served as moulds for the molten metal which ran over this quartering of the soil as it poured out of the furnaces, forming itself into ingots. All about the earth was burning hot, obliging the doctor to keep his feet constantly moving. The thick walls of the furnaces radiated a suffocating heat which scorched the skin, but the engineer, accustomed to the temperature, explained the working of the blast furnaces with the greatest calmness.

Each one of them, so Sanabre explained, was charged with three thousand kilos of ore, fifteen hundred of coke and five hundred of lime. The gigantic tubes were filled from above, and slowly, by means of the furnace inside, the metal was formed which by its own weight descended till it ran molten out of the base of the towers. To heat the furnaces and put them in condition to work properly cost a fortune; if they went out it was necessary to pull them down and rebuild them, a matter of even greater outlay.

Any carelessness in the work, or a strike, could cost the very life of those industrial giants, which existed only by burning and swallowing up combustibles at all hours. When a strike broke out in the mountains and the feeding lines for the ore were paralyzed, still it was necessary to supply the furnaces with fuel. Those enormous tubes of stone, for all their immensely massive appearance, were as deli-

cate as mechanical toys which the slightest carelessness could render useless.

While the engineer was explaining all these matters, the doctor, marveling at the enormous bulk of the two smelting towers which seemed to him like pillars of the firmament, was thinking of the fire worship of ancient races, of the adoration in which they held the great creative and destructive element, of the holocaust of human victims burned within the awful embrace of fiery idols.

Suddenly a small hole opened in the base of one of the towers and a point of dazzling light appeared, a red star whose sharp rays pierced the eyes; it became larger and a dark red stream like a bull's blood ran over the ground with noisy hissing.

"Is that the iron?" enquired Aresti.

"No, it is the scoria, or refuse from the metal. The iron will come afterwards."

The doctor breathed with difficulty. Outside the spring afternoon was warm and comfortable but within the plant and beside these industrial infernos life seemed impossible. His eyes smarted and he felt sure that his eyelashes must be scorched; his skin was dried up till he felt a sharp needle in every pore and his feet seemed to be on fire.

Aresti was astonished at the workmen who were quite at home in the asphyxiating heat, moving about like salamanders amid the fiery streams of the molten metal and all shrivelled and blackened like mummies, as though their scorching task had left them nothing but their skeletons and their skin. Almost naked,

their bodies protected only by large leather aprons, they looked like Egyptian slaves performing some mysterious rite, and many of them bore on their uncovered limbs the scars of horrible burns caused by sparks from the metal.

Sanabre pointed to the mouth of the furnace. The flow was beginning, it was not now a starlike point that was opening in the fire clay but a great round cherry-colored sun with green undulations, which scorched and nearly blinded the eyes. The iron flowed out through the canal prepared for it, spreading itself in thick waves over the narrow courses in the ground. Aresti feared he would be suffocated from the spluttering of the metal as it came in contact with the air and threw up clouds of sparks and flames broken into innumerable fragments. Like blue and golden butterflies they looked, fluttering dizzily with wings of trembling points, or they were greenish mosquitoes buzzing for an instant, only to vanish and give place to others in endless swarms. The iron, which was an intense rose color as it poured out of the furnace with noisy gurglings, flowed thickly through the channels, turning in its cooling from blood red to white.

The doctor could bear the heat no longer; seizing hold of Sanabre he cried:

"Let us get away, you devil's own engineer. It is enough to kill one."

They saw now, as the channel for the metal changed its course, a stream of molten fire pouring into a huge tank mounted on a trolley. This was

the devil's broth for the convertors. The little toy-like locomotive whistled and started at full drive from under the adjoining roofs, hauling the tank wherein the red liquid rippled at the edges with every vibration of the wheels.

Aresti, almost blinded by such splendor, took the engineer's hand.

"Guide me, Virgil," said he. "I am like the poet of the infernal regions. Take care we are not burned."

They walked along the platform close to the blast furnaces, jumping over the streams of boiling metal, each time they stepped over a furrow a flame rushed up at their feet.

"At last! . . . here one can breathe," said the doctor, as they came down from the platform from which the metal was flowing, thankful to place his feet once more on terra firma.

Quite exhausted by his experience he sat down and wiped the perspiration from his face and fanned himself with his handkerchief.

"It seems quite impossible, Fernandito," he said, "that anyone living here should have the courage to think of love-making. I should dream of a big vat, as big as one of those towers, filled with water as cold as snow—"

"But you have yet to see another inferno, only this next one is even more picturesque," laughed the engineer, as he led the doctor to the shed of the convertors. These were enormous bells hung almost on a level with the roofs, in open spaces so that their showers of sparks could escape freely. Those in

charge of them reached them by iron ladders when it came to the operation of turning them.

Sanabre spoke enthusiastically of the Bessemer convertor, that wonderful industrial discovery which had cheapened steel and had at the same time enriched Bilbao, as it required minerals free from phosphorus like those found in the Biscayan mountains. Before this invention, steel had been made in the old furnaces by means of puddling, a much slower and more expensive process; but now all the metal for rails, the industry's greatest output, was made with dizzy rapidity. The engineer described with the rapture of a devotee the functions of this admirable convertor. The iron was purified inside it by an immense current of air which neutralized the carbon, the silicate and the manganese, and so formed the steel. While their output was not as high in grade as some others, the engineer explained, yet it served perfectly for railways, that great necessity of modern life.

Aresti could scarcely hear what was said to him, he was so bewildered by the grandeur of the spectacle. A tremendous roaring shook the roof and made the very earth tremble—it was the immense escape of energy and fire from the mouth of the convertor, forced out by the current of compressed air coming from the adjoining building containing the powerful injecting machines. The metal threw up a whirlwind of sparks and branches of flame through the upper mouth of the bell. But what sparks! What fire! It was so great, so inconceivable,

that Aresti recalled the sight of the metal pouring out of the blast furnaces as a little matter of no consequence at all.

A deafening roar proceeded from the bell, and a jet sprung straight up into space like a red palm tree, throwing out plumes of light, with blue, yellow and pinkish leaves which dropped off one by one and vanished before reaching the ground. Now and again as the bell was turned by invisible workmen its luminous stream was quenched, but when the cone was once more turned up the shower again rose with a louder roar and with blue colors that afterwards took on every hue of the rainbow. Outside the shed it was still daylight and the setting sun illuminated the ground beyond the sheds, but to eyes dazzled by the brilliancy of that flaming furnace everything seemed dark, as if night had already fallen.

Aresti no longer felt the asphyxiating heat, his interest was so thoroughly excited by the strange beauty of the new spectacle he now beheld, the liquid steel flowing into conical moulds and turned over by a crane when the liquid had solidified to become cone-shaped ingots looking like pinkish white sugar loaves. The sight of the workmen manipulating those incandescent blocks and dragging them out of the workshop astonished him. They walked among the white ingots with the confidence now of habit, yet the slightest touch of one of those infernal loaves would have turned their flesh into smoke, leaving the bones bare. Beautiful as they were they could kill a man, leaving nothing but a slight smell of scorching,

a little steam—and then nothing. Those diabolical cones fascinated him by their light and whiteness.

The doctor, having once satisfied his curiosity, turned to look at the workmen blackened and shrivelled up by that infernal temperature, bewildered by the deafening noise, sweating copiously, and moving the heaviest loads in an atmosphere that hardly permitted breathing. He recognized how unjustly he had often censured the alcoholism of these poor people. He thought of what he would do himself, if by any social misfortune he found himself condemned to this labor which dulled the senses and seemed to evaporate the brain in an atmosphere of fire. A perpetual thirst, like the thirst of the condemned, gripped these unhappy men. What greater pleasure could they have on going out of this inferno than the peace and shade of the tavern, with the glass in front of them which gave them a momentary joy and deceived them with a fictitious strength to continue this salamander's life! . . .

"I have seen enough," he said in wearied tones. "This is a grand spectacle—for winter time."

There outside under the open sky, hearing the panting of the machinery in the distance, watching the columns of smoke floating across the heavens the two men once more enjoyed the freshness of the twilight.

"It is a hard life," said the doctor, thinking of the furnace workers. "I shall be told that this horrible labor is one of the consequences of the progress of industry, and that one must consider it is for the

good of civilization. I agree, but still the unhappy man who has to earn his bread in this way may well complain of his wretched fate. That is if he has any brain left to think. And yet people are astonished that these poor people are not contented and that they believe the world is badly managed and not a model of comfort!"

With the doctor's views Sanabre agreed. He, better than others, could appreciate the severity of that labor, and feeling an infinite pity for the men who performed it, he was always ready to close his eyes to their shortcomings. In truth, although he would not confess it to anyone but the doctor, he was also something of a socialist.

"The greatest bitterness in the misery of these people," said the doctor, "is not found in the privations they suffer or in the hardship under which they earn their bread, it is in the demoralizing atmosphere that surrounds them."

And Aresti described the psychological unrest he had discovered among all the working army in the mines and factories around Bilbao. The miners in the quarries lived like beasts. But possibly, even so, did they not feed and sleep better than the laborers of the interior of Spain? For many, no doubt, the life in the mines was an amelioration of their condition, compared with the miserable existence, like that of abandoned animals, that they endured on their land in a year of drought or of bad harvest. In the factories the wages were higher than in the rest of the Peninsula, and they did not suffer from

the long stoppages of work to which poor and uncertain industries in other towns were exposed. But all the same, all who worked, whether in the mines or the factories, felt a dull rancor, a concentrated anger, an irritated longing for justice, as if they were the everlasting victims of bold robbery or of an inhuman despoiling. There was the moral unrest, the protest against the caprices of Fortune who in sight of all had passed by there, touching some and turning her back on the others.

The engineer recognized the truth of the doctor's remarks. The situation of these people was deplorable; strikes or a rise in wages had only a momentary effect. He believed like Aresti, that there was only one remedy for that unrest, to change the organization of the world and proclaim Social Justice as the sole religion, the only law. Charity must be suppressed, for charity is nothing more than hypocrisy drawing a mask of palliation over the cruelties of the present.

The two men were walking slowly towards the entrance gate in the gathering twilight across the rails and up and down over the platforms of the immense industrial works.

"But what irritates me," said the doctor, "with all these great fortunes made, as you may say, in a single night, is their inefficacy, their unproductiveness of any good to the people. You know that I am an enemy of individual wealth, but one must admit that in other countries it does some good and is of some use. In the United States, for example,

those worthies who make money with scandalous and indecent good luck and die worth hundreds of millions, have at all events the discretion to seek forgiveness by good works. One founds a university, another a museum or a library, something that is of some use in the emancipation and improvement of those they have ground during their lives. But here if anyone feels the gnawing desire to perpetuate his name he builds a convent or founds a chapel; if he pays any regard to the future it is that the future shall perpetuate the imbecility of the past."

"You know how I have defined the rich man of this country, to the great scandal of people in general who think me mad?—'a gentleman who spends his life practising every sort of mean economy on the workman, to carry home more money to his wife, which money his wife passes on to the Jesuits.'"

They were now close to the door, and Aresti stopped once more to inveigh against his country.

"What angers me most is the gloom of this country. When Bilbao was an obscure commercial town I am sure people enjoyed themselves more. Now with all its wealth it is nothing but a convent. Throughout the world people rejoice when Fortune knocks at their door, she certainly has visited us here and yet we live in a perpetual Lent. We carry the gloom in our souls, like those nobles who were forced to dress in black in the days of the Austrians."

There was neither love, nor dances, nor social intercourse between the two sexes, none of the joys of youth! Life was mummified in his country, Aresti

declared with irritation. Only in the lowest social strata where the influences of religion did not reach was there any pleasure. Joy of life he had seen expressed only on some Sunday afternoons in the gardens outside the town, where servants and workmen danced the Biscayan or Santander mountain dances to the music of street orchestras.

All the rest of the people were bored to death. He knew wealthy young men, who had no higher aspirations than to change their clothes eight times a day, others would motor through the streets with no real object, stopping for a moment at one house or another only to mount into the vehicle again to continue their purposeless way, as if trying to escape from the ennui that ever followed them.

"And is this the use of wealth? Is this the joyousness that one would expect of an opulent city? Able to make life beautiful, it punishes and darkens it with this tedium and with the gloom born of belief in another, problematic life—on the testimony, you must remember, of certain men who certainly have never seen it?"

Noticing that it was nearly time to get into his train, the doctor ended his protest energetically:

"Virtue is a great thing, Fernandito. I admire and respect it when it smiles and does not place itself in antagonism to life. But my country, so gloomy with its dead soul, is so virtuous—so very virtuous! Believe me, my son, such virtue disgusts me."

CHAPTER V

DOÑA CRISTINA was in her room giving the last touches to her golden hair which was beginning to be slightly streaked with grey, while out of the corner of her eye she was watching in the looking-glass the hands of a clock placed on the marble chimney-piece.

It was three in the afternoon and at four she was due in Bilbao to preside over a meeting of ladies in the College of the Sacred Heart.

Pepita was not going with her, she pleaded a headache, so her mother decided to leave her at home under the guardianship of her old nurse.

Sanchez Morueta had been for over a week in Madrid, engrossed in those new affairs which demanded his presence every month in the capital. His wife welcomed those absences with joy. It was not that he opposed his wife's tastes or interfered in her life, but all the same she felt happier when she was alone and did not see those cold eyes, which though they did not show the slightest reproach, she surmised followed all her movements in mute protest.

Pepita presided over her mother's toilette, and the

great change that had come upon her lately could not escape the daughter's notice. All the elegant dresses of former days were now getting moth-eaten in the wardrobes, while no new consignments from Paris or Madrid came to take their place. Sometimes she concerned herself with her daughter's dresses, she wished to see her elegantly dressed and advised her as they looked through the fashion papers together, but it was with the kindness of an older person talking to a child about its toys. She herself was now always dressed in black, the stuff poor and without gloss. Pepita also noted in her underclothing a carelessness, a neglect that often overstepped the limits of hygiene. Everything about her betrayed a contempt of the flesh worthy of the most fervent devotee, the physical self-abandonment and the want of cleanliness that are praised as celestial virtues in the lives of many Saints.

She wished in all things to mortify the flesh. Her daughter often lately had noticed her at table refuse the most delicate dishes which had formerly been her favorites and which now she said disgusted her. By degrees any furniture which displayed the least sign of luxury or comfort had disappeared from her bedroom. Throughout all the rest of the house solid and sumptuous comfort reigned, but in her own room all the furnishings of other days had given place to a servant's small hard bed which she had caused to be brought down from the attic, and a large and bloody figure of Christ occupying one panel of the wall between two chromos of very brilliant colouring

representing Jesus and Mary tearing open their breasts to display their burning hearts.

Many mornings the servants found the bed unslept in. Their mistress, so they declared in their kitchen gossip, either slept on the floor or did not sleep at all. Her underclothing that passed less and less frequently through the laundress' hands was often spotted with blood, and one of the maids had picked up lying forgotten on the bed a horrible bristling girdle of esparto grass, one of the severest penitential tortures fashioned by certain nuns at Begoña.

All in the household guessed the mortifications to which their mistress subjected her body, but nevertheless they saw her smiling, with a honeyed sweetness in her voice and expression, raising her eyes to heaven at every annoyance, and exclaiming, "Let it be as God wills." Occasionally, her haughty former nature asserting herself, she would let herself be carried away at some hidden irritation that exasperated her nerves, but in a moment she would be wrapped again in her cloak of humility and silently with her eyes ask pardon for the outbreak.

Her husband did not seem to notice his wife's physical and moral transformation. For years past he had not crossed the threshold of her room. When he spoke with her he either did not look at her or glanced at her with vague and expressionless eyes which showed his thoughts were far away. Never a protest, never an enquiry, as though in the bottom of his heart this transformation, rendering impossible

all return to their former relations, pleased him.

Pepita watched her mother's hurried dressing with pity in her eyes, the hair so carelessly done up, everything without a trace of coquetry.

"Mother, do put on that black bonnet, it is very pretty and suits you so well."

Doña Cristina shook her head.

"No, daughter, no bonnets—all that is passed, everything has its time. I am old, and I ought not to dress gaily at meetings that are for the good of religion."

"But, mother, it is a very serious bonnet, a very religious bonnet."

"No, my daughter, I shall wear the traditional mantilla, what our good and ancient people wore before so many evils came in from abroad."

And the woman who was still so handsome, with all the charm of maturity filling out her outlines and making them soft and velvety, seemed to take a painful delight in noticing in the looking glass as she arranged the mantilla, the grey hairs showing amid the ruddy gold, the sadness of her large blue eyes, and the pained expression of her mouth compressed in perpetual prayer.

Doña Cristina was now ready to start.

"Mother, you remember my commission—" said Pepita.

"I will not forget it," answered her mother with a kindly smile. "I ought not to do it, for a lie is always a sin, still one may lie when it does no harm to a third person. I will pull your little string, so that

the good mothers shall not know of your laziness."

Pepita imitated the innocent stratagem of many of her companions when they did not wish to attend the meetings of the Daughters of Mary. In the hall of the college hung a large frame with the names of all the members on it and by each was a little blue cord attached to an ivory slip. Each lady on entering pulled her little string, to record her attendance in this way and friends sometimes undertook to do this for absentees, thus deceiving the nuns who, when the meeting was over, examined the list with minute curiosity.

As Pepita thought of that frame she could see the reception room of the Daughters of Mary, with its monastic comfort and the large map of the order representing Europe and America, every place in which feminine Jesuitism had an establishment being marked with a small flaming heart. The Atlantic of an astounding blue had been rechristened with a fresh name, "The Ocean of Mercy," though no one knew exactly what this particular mercy could be that was attributed to the Atlantic by the nun who drew the map.

Doña Cristina went downstairs hurriedly to the superb motor that was waiting for her at the door. She considered driving up to the door of the Jesuits' Church in it as a kind of homage to faith, it was the *dernier cri* of devotion, showing according to her, that progress and religion were not inimical.

As she drove along she thought of the importance of this meeting at which they were going to consider

the advisability of a fresh pilgrimage to Begoña. It would be a pilgrimage quite as important as that of the Coronation of the Virgin and the question was whether it would be best to hold it during the present or the following year. It would be necessary to organize a display of all their forces, to assemble all the Biscayan country, all the people who loved the old traditions and who would go in procession with banners and canticles to Mount Artagan, as a protest against the unbelievers of the mines and the foundries with their monstrous socialism and against the "Maketos" of the town and their sons, who though now considering themselves as indeed a part of the country yet spoke of a Republic and of anti-clericalism and in their meetings called the miraculous image of the Patroness of Biscay a "fetish" and its abode a "nest of rats."

At this meeting of ladies Padre Pauli, a fighting Jesuit, who was the fashion just now in the pulpit and confessional, and Fermin Urquiola who was his chief assistant, "my right arm," as that leading light of the Company called him, were to assist the ladies as directors with their inspiration.

Doña Cristina was filled with admiration of her nephew as she saw the affection with which the Fathers treated him, letting him share in all their projects for the religious salvation of the country.

Fermin was a kind of extension of the Company that reached out as far as to her. She always felt a bitter disappointment at being unable to go from the visiting parlor into the Residential house. She

longed to know what Deusto was like inside, that temple of learning so wrapped in mystery, and her nephew during his calls upon her which were daily becoming more frequent, entertained her for hours at a time telling her of the places which the rules of the Company, not allowing feminine visitors, did not permit her to see.

Urquiola furnished her with minute accounts of the life of each father, enumerating their several and peculiar merits. One had travelled through savage countries, another spoke six languages, another played the violin like an angel. They were all so modest, sleeping in small cells of scrupulous cleanliness, hanging their clothes nightly in bags outside their doors to be brushed by the lay brothers, and dressing at early dawn to recommence their holy work. They lived in a certain comfort, but nowhere were those riches apparent that were attributed to them by the impious. They were all so humble, so amiable, so completely forgetful of any brilliant past, though many amongst them were of the great ones of the earth. Hidden beneath the cassock of obedience there might always be a disguised prince.

But the university of Deusto interested Doña Cristina even more. How she regretted not being able to enter that palace, to wander over the beautiful mountainous park, and to examine closely that image of Saint Joseph with its canopy of electric lights which dominated the country side. All the ancient nobility and the wealthy people of sound principles entrusted their sons to this holy school. There was

no danger there as in lay universities of their meeting revolutionary professors, while ancient and modern science was dispensed only after being well passed through the sieve of St. Thomas or that of other Fathers of the Church who were the sole depositaries of truth.

Doña Cristina was intensely interested. It must be evident to all that her cousin had been educated at that University; that was why he was such a fine gentleman, so Christian, devoting his powerful muscles to the holy cause of God. He was not like the youth who came from Madrid contaminated with all evil ideas and who displayed in their habits a laxity of morals which corrupted the whole countryside.

The good lady rose up in arms when she heard anyone speak of Urquiola's rakish excesses, first of all denying them and then attempting to defend them. It was only the exuberance of youth and the bad example of the young men who had not been educated at Deusto. But his grounding was good and all else would pass. Urquiola was reserved for high destinies now that he mixed in political struggles. He was well directed, and who knew but that he might not become a Deputy and set forth the word of God in Madrid where all men lived forgetful of heaven! She and her cousin were sufficiently strong to turn Bilbao once more into the true path, provided the advice of the good Fathers did not fail them.

From her bedroom window Pepita watched the departure of her mother's car; when it had disappeared

in clouds of dust she turned her eyes to the landscape. Never had the view seemed to her so beautiful as that summer evening. She had been accustomed to it from infancy yet now she looked at it as something new, something she had only just discovered.

She seemed to-day more than ever before in touch with the people she saw walking along the river bank, families from Bilbao, as she knew them to be, who had come by the cars to walk by the sea. A group of workmen were passing through a little pine wood on their way to the wine shop, singing "Boga boga, marinero" at the top of their voices, and the old Biscayan song almost brought tears into her eyes. The river sparkled beneath the sun's rays, the suspension bridge of Biscay along which crowds of people, carriages and bullock wagons were passing, looked as though hung in air, while in the distance the sea was dashing against the breakwater, throwing up misty clouds of spray.

The young girl lingered on dreamily looking at the view, now and again glancing at the suspension bridge as though she might recognize some of those who were passing over. Once, even, she thought she saw the flutter of something white, perhaps it was a handkerchief discreetly waved, fearful of attracting the attention of the passers by. As she saw no further sign she concluded her hopes had deceived her and even more dreamily than before she turned back to her landscape.

She woke with a start, feeling a hand on her shoulder.

"He is there," said the old nurse, mysteriously. "You must go down into the garden."

The young girl's melancholy at once gave way to anxiety and fear. This interview with Fernando Sanabre had been planned for a long while, but now that the moment had come she felt as though she were committing a crime. Her nurse laughed at her fears, treating her with the same familiarity as when she was a child. Poor little innocent! What harm could there be in a lovers' meeting in broad daylight in the garden, and beneath her eyes who was to her as a mother? But Pepita could not be reassured. Respect and fear of her mother completely dominated her and she expected at every moment that the stern figure of Doña Cristina would appear from behind some corner of the shrubbery.

She had only agreed to this interview as the result of infinite persuasion from Fernando. The young fellow was in despair at not being able to speak with her for a single moment alone, being obliged to content himself with a few hasty words exchanged as he entered or left his employer's house, or with the letters carried backwards and forwards by the complaisant nurse.

Pepita had insisted that the interview should take place in the garden under the eyes of the household, thinking this would be less blameworthy than if she received Fernando indoors.

When she reached the shrubbery, Fernando was already passing through the iron gates, expressing surprise at the porter's reply that his mistress was

not at home. He had come to see her, to enquire when Don José was expected back from his journey, but as her daughter was in the garden he would go in and pay his respects anyway.

The two young people stood hesitating, overcome with shyness on finding themselves face to face.

"Go along, take a walk," said the rough Nicanora, energetically. "If you have anything to say to one another say it without fear, and I am here to warn you if anything should happen."

She stood for a few moments arranging her shawl, allowing the lovers to walk slowly away, their eyes on the ground, bewildered by the thoughts they burned to express and not knowing how to begin.

Fernando was the first to break the silence, beginning like all lovers, by declaring the happiness he felt at being at last near the woman he loved. How he had longed for this moment! He remembered the long hours of silent contemplation in his study at the blast furnaces, his eyes fixed on Pepita's letters as though her smile could mysteriously appear between the lines of her handwriting.

"See, dearest," he said, his voice rising with passion, "your voice, your divine voice was what touched me most. I think I have always loved you ever since I first knew you as a little child. I loved you without knowing it, but the day my eyes were opened, the day I first knew I really loved you, was when I listened to you singing the sweet sad old Biscayan songs, that you seemed to sing with your whole heart."

Fernando had first realized his love hearing her sing the *Goizeco izarra*—the invocation to the morning star. He had not understood the words, but the music, Ah! the music! had penetrated to the depths of his soul. Later on he had had the words translated for him.

“Now I understand it,” continued the young man. “I know it and I believe it, I feel its infinite tenderness. ‘The morning star, without a cloud, flames on the horizon; but by your side, my beloved, it pales and is scarcely to be seen’—that is just what I think, my life.”

Pepita, now quite calm, laughed at her lover’s ardor. “How exaggerated! How . . . romantic!” But was it really true that her voice had made so great an impression on him? She was really astonished that any song could move him so deeply. She sang to amuse herself, but it seemed to her foolish to take seriously what was only said to accompany the music. They were all charming fables, imagined by poets to enliven life, very pretty certainly, but after all nothing but inventions.

There passed through Fernando’s memory like a blast of icy wind words the doctor had more than once let fall. The Biscayans felt an almost mad love for music, singing at every moment of their lives, and their songs had the melancholy sadness of their landscapes—but the feeling was on the lips only, an exterior sentimentality that dispersed itself in the air.

“No, dearest,” insisted the lover, “without knowing it you threw your whole soul into your voice—you

are for me the star of the song, but I shall not say its last lines to you, 'Good-bye for ever, good-bye.' If I lost you after being loved I do not know what would become of me. Say you love me, Pepita, say you love me."

The young girl was too shy to say aloud what she had so often written in her letters.

"Do you not know it?" she replied evasively. "Have I not told you so, many times?"

"Repeat it, I want to hear it from your lips. Tell me you love me."

Then Pepita, looking into his eyes for the first time, said gravely, as though putting into her words the weight of a solemn oath:

"Yes, I love you, I love you, Fernando."

Oh that look! For Fernando it was the most precious part of the interview, he stored it in his memory, endeavoring to preserve its full light, so that it might accompany him in the long hours spent at the foundries when there was nothing to sweeten life but memories.

Fernando at last was satisfied that Pepita loved him. Her look, her voice were more convincing than all the precious letters kept in his desk. And she, as she looked at him, was sincere.

"Yes, I love you," repeated Pepita. "Do not doubt me, do not be childish; you shall never say good-bye to me."

"Little one, dear little one!" exclaimed the engineer, rapturously. "How dearly I love you! How happy I am!"

The old nurse, Nicanora, who followed them at a discreet distance, smiled with pity as she caught a few words. All lovers were the same, peasant folk or gentle folk, they were all alike; it was only the difference of words, nothing more. They could speak only foolishly and yet with such solemnity, as though the existence of the whole world depended on what they said. Ah! youth . . . youth! . . . and she laughed with the indulgence of a veteran at the earnestness of the two young people.

Fernando, more tranquil after Pepita's words, talked of the future. He would work, who knew how far a man could go! Since he had been in love he had felt a fresh energy for work; and certain mechanical inventions were shaping themselves in his brain which, if realized, would double Sanchez Morueta's profits.

But the remembrance of his chief dispelled the young man's dreams.

"What will your father say when he knows of our love? You know from my letters the anxiety this has caused me; it oftentimes robs me of my sleep. And your mother? How I dread her. We are very happy loving one another, but the future holds many sorrows for us. Ah! if only all your family were like the doctor!"

And he spoke warmly of Aresti, and of the kindness with which he viewed their love.

"Yes, my cousin is very kind," said Pepita, referring to the doctor as of a distant relation whom the family only remembered now and again. "It is

a pity he has such strange ideas, he is very sympathetic to me, but mother thinks he is mad."

Once more they dwelt on their love but with the uncertainty of the future in their minds.

Fernando was afraid. Her parents would probably wish to marry her to the heir of some millionaire, or possibly to some gentleman of small fortune who could offer ancient titles of nobility. In any case he himself would be the last they would think of since in their eyes he was little more than an intellectual servant of the family. In spite of loving her so much he would lose her! The difference of fortune, that cursed law of classes, would close the way to them and separate them.

"But I love only you!" said the girl smiling up at him.

In an outburst of gratitude Fernando tried to seize her hands, but she withdrew them quickly behind her back, frowning angrily.

"Be quiet," she said in an offended tone with a sudden transition from tenderness to haughtiness. The voice even did not sound the same, she seemed to resent the innocent action as a liberty.

Once again Fernando remembered Aresti's words, "This is a heartless country, no one has ever known a girl to run away with her lover."

He stood for a few moments startled and taken aback at the girl's sudden action. Pepita seemed sorry for what she had done, still she remained silent, waiting for him to speak first.

"Possibly your mother may wish Fermin Urquiola

to be your husband," said Fernando at last sadly.

"That man, never, never!"

She spoke of the repugnance she felt for him, of his vanity and insolence in courting at the same time several young ladies in the city, coldly calculating which of their fortunes would best suit him. And she knew his life. The girls at their parties spoke of him below their breath, as of a Don Juan who attracted all fools with the enchantment of his vices. Moreover everyone knew that in old Bilbao there was a woman who lived with him as his wife, and it was even said he had children.

"Oh! marry that man. Never—never!" she repeated with a gesture of repugnance.

She was incapable of rebellion against her mother in everything else, but she did dare to oppose Doña Cristina in her appreciation of that so beloved relative. But the thought of Urquiola seemed to remind her of some moral defect in her lover and she asked him gently:

"Tell me, Fernando, have you any religion? or is it true that you think like my cousin, tell me it is not so Fernando, tell me it is not so."

The engineer looked at the girl who was contemplating him with questioning eyes of most alarming candor. He saw that she trembled as she waited for his answer in great fear, as just for a moment he felt inclined to break out in praise of his humanitarian beliefs like those of the doctor. But he checked himself, his instinct warning him not to alarm a sleeping soul.

“Yes, my life, I have a religion,” he replied evasively. “I believe that man ought to be good and happy in this world, and for that he must work.”

Pepita did not seem to understand him, and spoke of her mother. If she made that inquiry it was only because Doña Cristina had said one day that he was just like her cousin the Doctor.

“If you knew how this thought has made me suffer for fear it should be true. I could not tell you in my letters, but I wanted to see you to convince myself of the truth. Now I am happy. I said all along, this cannot be, for Fernando is good; certainly somewhat mad and romantic, like all who do not belong to this country, but it would be impossible he should think such dreadful things, like that unhappy sinner my cousin.”

Coming closer to him she asked with a gentleness in strong contrast to her late fierce repulse,

“As you believe in God, why do you not go like all the other young men in Bilbao to confess to the Fathers? Why do I never see you at the Residencia?”

Sanabre shrugged his shoulders, not knowing what to reply, while Pepita went on talking—no doubt he went to mass every Sunday in the Church nearest the foundries, was it not so? And in her eyes he could read the expectation of an affirmative answer to her question, as if the suspicion could never occur to her that he passed the holy days without hearing mass. After all, it would not cost him much to go down into the city and attend the church by the Residencia. God was everywhere but she—she really

did not know how to express herself—she thought that in that church which was so beautiful and so comfortable He was nearer. Besides, religion there was very “distinguished,” one only saw nice people there.

“I have a great deal to do,” said Fernando evading the question, “I am a slave to my duties, and work in itself is a religion.”

Pepita went on. He would lose nothing by approaching the Fathers—he ought to try and make himself pleasant to them. They were such good people, so interested in others and always working for their happiness. There existed no obstacles for them, they made everything plain and easy by their wisdom. One ought to follow them with closed eyes. If only they chose to help, then indeed there would be nothing to fear!

“Fernandito,” she pleaded in her most caressing voice, “Go there, be sympathetic. I am certain mother would look on you more favorably if some Father spoke about you . . . and I should be so happy!”

“We will see—we will see,” murmured Fernando undecidedly.

He was doubtful as to the tortuous course proposed to him, but he felt the cowardice of love and shut his eyes. He who was capable of the greatest efforts to win the woman he loved, why should he feel any misgivings as to this course which might after all lead to success?

“I love you,” he exclaimed passionately, “Nothing

shall hold me back from trying to win you. I will seek out those Fathers, I will go to the Residencia, I will do everything you tell me. But how if in spite of this your family will not receive me? And if your mother wishes to marry you to another?"

Sanabre attacked at last the great question that his loving anxiety had long thought over, that in fact had made him most desirous for this interview.

Pepita's eyes dropped, she was thoughtful and undecided, she did not dare to look at her lover for fear he should read her thoughts.

"Say, my life," he continued, "if they oppose our love . . . if they separate us, what will you do?"

The girl avoided a direct answer, murmuring only tenderly,

"I love you dearly, Fernando—I love you."

"I know it. And my heart is full of joy at hearing you say it. But we must talk seriously, dropping romanticism as you call it. I am poor and you are immensely rich. Would you be capable of exchanging your life of wealth and ease, for a modest life by the side of a working man, who would love you dearly . . . dearly?"

Pepita did not seem disturbed at the changed life proposed to her, neither did she seem to fear the modest fortune of which her lover spoke.

"You will work, Fernando, you will be rich."

She said this with the conviction of a happy girl who does not believe in the possibility of poverty, a condition reserved for people of a different race which could never touch her nor those about her. To live

without the advantages of wealth which made her the first wherever she went, seemed to her so absurd that it was useless to speak of it.

"But if your parents command you to forget me? And if they separate us? Shall you be capable of resisting their will? Could you disobey them to become my wife?"

Pepita's eyes grew large with absolute wonder, as if she were listening to something quite unheard of, as though a great and unforeseen danger were opening before her, something monstrous beyond the limits of human possibility.

"I love you, Fernando; I shall never forget you."

But she would say no more. Her lover pressed her with questions, he wished to gauge her courage to face the future danger, to realize the strength of her will, to measure the depth of her love; but she with her head bent, ever evaded the answer, always repeating the same words, "I love you—I love you." Why should they talk of what was still in the future? The two of them could think of what ought to be done when the time came.

There was a painful silence. She seemed offended that he wished to commit her to any definite resolution, and he thought afresh of the doctor—truly they were of different races, feeling passion in quite different ways.

The evening was coming on and Sanabre knew he ought to leave. Doña Cristina might return. But he thought with dread of the long hours of anguish he would spend at the blast furnaces.

"But do tell me you will love me for ever," said he seizing one of Pepita's hands, forgetting his former repulse. "Tell me that happen what will, you will not forget me!"

"Yes—I love you; I could never forget you."

And she left her hand in Fernando's without resistance, much as a precious thing is given to a fretful child to comfort it. He caressed with rapture the little hand which in spite of its delicacy reminded him so strongly of the big powerful hands of Sanchez Morueta.

At this moment the nurse interrupted his amorous caresses. The porter had just opened the gates and the motor was coming slowly up the chief entrance through the garden.

The two young people followed by the nurse ran towards the house door to meet Doña Cristina on her arrival.

As she descended from the motor and saw Pepita standing by the engineer, she looked severely at the nurse who replied with the defiant look of an old servant who from her length of service would admit of no reproof.

Sanabre could not hide his confusion as he saluted his employer's wife. He had come to enquire when Don José would return from his journey.

Doña Cristina answered him curtly. He might have saved himself the trouble of the visit by enquiring by telephone.

"But the truth is," he said, "that I also wanted to see you both."

"Many thanks," replied the lady haughtily, "I am obliged to you for your attention. Are you coming in?"

But her eyes made him understand that he might withdraw.

The young girl watched her lover as he walked away humiliated and crestfallen and then went up to her room, momentarily expecting the terrible apparition of her angry mother.

But she did not come up. Pepita thought she could hear her voice in the distance trembling with anger, and the nurse replying no less acrimoniously.

That evening when they met again in the dining-room Doña Cristina looked steadily at her daughter, but her words were brief.

"Let this be the last time," she said, "that you receive visits either inside the house or in the garden. It was possibly accidental that this individual should come the same evening that you remained at home saying you were not feeling well."

Her eyes seemed to pierce the girl, endeavoring to search her very soul. But Pepita remained unmoved, with the calm dissimulation which is not learned, but which is instinctive in a woman and which love increases.

CHAPTER VI

IT was a beautiful summer dawn without a cloud in the sky as the rising sun was heralded by a blood red glow that quenched the last twinkling of the stars.

Bilbao was awakening. The whistling of the locomotives announced the departure of the first trains for Portugalete and Las Arenas; the workmen who were employed on the river banks were hastening along the Arenal, carrying their dinners wrapped up in pieces of cloth. The Nervion could just be perceived like a band of steel through the mist lying over its deep bed; sea gulls disturbed by the red glow lighting up the town circled over the roofs and finally spread their wings towards the sea, following the winding course of the estuary till they reached the open water of the harbor.

All the shops belonging to the poorer class were beginning to open, provision stores, taverns and wine vaults. Witch-like old women dressed in black, called by the bells of many churches, were making their way to early mass. The servants passing along the Arenal carrying their baskets on their way to San Anton's market, and the country women who stopped to rest for a moment while putting their baskets of vegetables and jars of milk on the ground, turned

toward the Sendeja as they heard the puffing of a motor.

Those who lived in the city immediately recognized the wife and daughter of Sanchez Morueta in their black dresses with mantillas that fell over their eyes.

At once the gossip started upon this early drive. These rich people got up even earlier than working people. They were probably going to the Residencia to confess to the Jesuit fathers—all the gentlefolk went there.

Doña Cristina never entered that church without a pleasant feeling of luxury for there without effort, in an almost voluptuous ease and away from the common crowd, she could win the salvation of her soul. It was almost as though she were entering a luxurious and elegant drawing room.

She recognized gratefully the ability of the Fathers as she looked about her at the decoration of the church. It was Gothic, but without the crude whiteness and the bare sobriety of the old cathedrals. The pointed architecture was enriched throughout with color; gold and vermillion were lavished over the fluted pillars and the pointed arches, the vaulting was blue with golden stars like the sky in a theatre. All this lavishness and beauty, so pretty and charming, could have been devised only by the Fathers of the Company. The noisy and tempestuous organ had been replaced by a harmonium, and in place of the swarthy and horrifying saints of the ancient Spanish worship, were now smiling, rosy, freshly

varnished images, correct and distinguished, much more suited to the worship of wealthy people. A last and grateful change, a profusion of electric lights replaced the old smoky wax tapers the smell of which had made the ladies feel faint.

Doña Cristina and her daughter walked up the aisle between rows of penitents kneeling by the side of the confessionals. As it was summer there were more people in the church than at other seasons, indeed Doña Cristina could have guessed the time of the year by the class of people present. There were fewer ladies than in winter, the lower orders, well-to-do tradeswomen and old devotees whose means of livelihood were problematical, always took advantage of the high-born ladies' summer holidays to take possession of their particular church and its holy priests.

Pepita and her mother knelt down opposite a confessional, the one, unfortunately, which had the most people waiting in front of its grating. It would be a very long while before their turn for confession came along.

There was a slight flutter of respect and curiosity among the double row of kneeling women all dressed in black and veiled in mantillas. Doña Cristina accepted with a slight inclination of her head the places in the row which two old women arose to offer, and opening her purse gave each one of them a peseta. They shuffled off well content to search out a less frequented confessional for in truth Padre Pauli did not please them greatly in spite of his reputation.

He always listened impatiently when through his grating he could perceive the musty smell of old mantillas and he showed too much haste in getting rid of these intruders who dared to mix with his elegant flock.

The mother and daughter now finding themselves close to the confessional with only a few penitents ahead of them opened their prayer books, and sitting on their heels waited quietly.

Doña Cristina felt as much emotion as a girl in the presence of the man she loved.

Padre Pauli was a celebrated man. The good lady admired his energy and his strength of will, thinking he somewhat resembled St. Ignatius who had been a soldier before he became a Saint, and who had always preserved beneath his cassock the courage of a warrior. One need only read the liberal papers to understand the offence given even in Madrid by the words and deeds of Padre Pauli and to be quite convinced that no one labored in the cause of God as he did. He did not depend on veiled words as did many priests who spoke only of pity and pardon and of the sweetness of Jesus. No, he was the wild boar of the church, who finding himself on favorable ground in that country where the luxuriant foliage of faith and blind submission flourished exceedingly, rushed forth furiously upon his foes. "For all the enemies of religion—a rod," he announced with a fierce arrogance which fired the enthusiasm of his lay auxiliary Fermin Urquiola.

He neglected no means of propagating his war-

like views. His sermons at the great pilgrimages, at the festivals of the Association of the Nocturnal Watch and before other corporations of which he was director were the battle cries of a warlike leader, crying out like the crusading paladins of old for slaying and dying for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. His celebrated pamphlet addressed "To the Catholic Ladies," published on the eve of the elections, had been discussed even in the Chamber of Deputies.

He was a fighting man who went straight to his ends, even to attacking accepted religious practices in defence of religion. In his pamphlet he inveighed against women's luxury and the money they squandered in almsgiving. He would admit of no new dresses, and no charities, every thought and every contribution ought to be devoted to the elections that with the buying of votes the will of the people should be suborned in order that the chosen candidate of God might carry the poles triumphantly. Thus would be discredited and nipped in the bud at once that extension of the franchise which, by placing the lower orders on a level with the higher, was overturning all the ancient laws of society.

In one of these recent struggles in which his success had delighted and inspirited the religious world and which gave the energetic Jesuit added prestige as an invincible leader, Doña Cristina had finally broken with the last vestiges of friendly intimacy which had still existed between herself and her husband. The liberals were seeking the assistance of Sanchez Morueta, remembering that he had fought

for them during the siege and the millionaire had given them a thousand pesetas toward the expenses of the election. On the same day Doña Cristina with the full liberty she enjoyed of disposing of her husband's money, had given two thousand pesetas to Padre Pauli. When the two opposing gifts became known in Bilbao the contempt and ridicule of both parties fell on Sanchez Morueta. At first Doña Cristina had trembled at her husband's silence, she seemed to hear Aresti's ironical laugh far away in the mines, she feared the giant's noisy explosion at finding himself made a laughing stock by a woman who, after all, was no more to him than a house-keeper. But day after day passed and still he kept his silence, as though with the first impulse of anger over, there remained nothing but contempt for petty annoyances such as this which were not worth fresh quarrels and the disturbance of the physical comforts a quiet home brought him.

As time went on Doña Cristina had lost her first feeling of apprehension and well satisfied with the outcome of the affair, she could smile modestly at the friends who congratulated her on her outburst of conjugal independence for the greater glory of God. The praise of Padre Pauli was itself a reward for all the terrors that her husband's gloomy face had made her suffer. At a meeting of ladies of the church the Jesuit had compared her with some of the masterful women of the Bible and to a long list of saints, all princesses and counsellors of kings. "With such valiant ladies, the reign of Jesus must soon return

upon earth," the valiant fighter had concluded. Urquiola was another panegyrist who in the meetings of young Catholics praised amid much laughter the trick his cousin had played on her gigantic sour-faced husband.

After this splendid achievement the pious lady entered the church as though it were her own home, believing that her partnership in so signal a victory and her own much spoken of sacrifice, united her to the good Fathers and made her one of their family.

The confessor after he had despatched several penitents, put his head out of the sacred box and gave a rapid glance at the row of kneeling women before him while he mumbled a few prayers.

"Doubtless he has recognized me," thought Doña Cristina with pride, "he will not be long in despatching those that are in front."

She thought of the confessor's surprise at seeing her there in the summer time when usually owing to the increased number of services at Las Arenas and Portugalete, her visits to the church of the Residencia were few. "Surely," her thoughts ran, "the good father will know something extraordinary has happened to bring his daughter here in confession." And such most certainly was the case.

The salvation of her soul was not in any danger, neither did any serious sin weigh heavily on her mind. But the Jesuit required that everything, absolutely everything, that in any degree disturbed the minds of his penitents should be told him as this was the only way by which they could be properly di-

rected. Now she had come to make an extraordinary confession both as wife and Christian mother.

First of all she wished to speak to him about a letter which she had found in her husband's study. Sanchez Morueta had arrived home on the previous day after a fortnight's sojourn in France on account of some commercial transactions with a group of foreign capitalists who were spending the summer in Biarritz and with whom he wished to open up fresh enterprises. This at least was what she had understood from his few very curt words. But Doña Cristina felt very doubtful about all this, as two days before her husband's return she had found, as she arranged the papers on his table, a highly scented grey letter signed by a certain Judith, who judging from her name and her way of writing must be a heathen and a sinner. The handwriting was fantastic, the lines irregular, and the letter was in French, but the words she had been able to guess at and her feminine instinct had told her after the first glance that it was a love letter, written with the greatest freedom. What a horror! All Doña Cristina's chastity, all her repugnance for vile flesh arose in revolt at the contact of that piece of paper. She wanted to see no more and had left it where she had found it. She knew all that was necessary, her husband had a mistress, and it was probably for that reason that he spent so much of his time away from Bilbao.

At first for a moment Doña Cristina had experienced a sensation entirely new to her, a longing to

cry out in protest as if she had been the victim of a theft. She had felt a much greater interest in Sanchez Morueta than ever before, even in the first days of their marriage. Irritated by his infidelity, the woman awoke in her—possibly she was now to know love as the result of her angry impulse. But the feeling had lasted only a short time and her soul which seemed on the point of waking and rising up, had turned round on its other side and continued its slumber.

Doña Cristina had often been irritated at being unable to find any fault in that quiet well-behaved man other than that he was oblivious to religion and closed his doors to the ministers of God. Now she knew what she had always wanted, she had something tangible to cast in the teeth of the man who so persistently overawed her by his silence.

The chief thing in that sinful letter that had remained impressed on her memory was "*Mon gros loup chéri*." What could that man? She guessed it was something at once horrible and grotesque, and she smiled as she thought of the ludicrous figure of her husband with his patriarchal beard in love with one of those harpies who ridicule men while they devour their substance.

She wished to tell the Father of this discovery so that she might be helped by his advice. Furthermore, she wished to speak of her daughter and to ask him to give her a good lecture. Pepita was at the age for caprices and follies and since the evening when she had surprised her in the garden with the

engineer, she had felt a certain uneasiness about her. In point of fact she had made a most minute search in her daughter's room for any hidden letters or for anything that could give her the certainty of the courtship, but she had found nothing, though in her heart she felt pretty sure that something did exist. Possibly the nurse Nicanora, who was always so indulgent to the girl had something hidden away.

The lady who had been kneeling in front of her having finished her confession, Doña Cristina had already taken possession of the grating, trusting that whoever was occupying the opposite side would soon be absolved. At last the little window was opened and Pepita could see above her mother's shoulders a dark shadow which murmured "Why, Cristina! my daughter. What causes this unusual visit?"

Pepita heard nothing more, her mother's head was close to the grating, and the words of the confessor and his penitent were smothered in one confused murmur.

The young girl seated on her heels read her book of devotions automatically while she thought of what she should say to her confessor. She was close to her mother, and a few words came to her now and then through the indistinct hum.

She gathered that her mother was speaking about a letter which apparently interested her greatly, as she referred to it again and again. Pepita trembled as she thought of those letters she had hidden—the proofs of her fault, in the house at Las Arenas.

Doña Cristina raised her voice a little, apparently she had to make a great effort to utter something that was very painful, and Pepita heard her say with great difficulty, hesitating and gasping at every word, "*Mon . . . gros . . . loup . . . cheri.*" No, that most certainly did not concern her. But what did her mother mean by saying such things? What wolf was it that her mother carried so laboriously in French to the ears of the good Father? And Pepita bit her lip to refrain from laughing, not knowing exactly why that phrase, that she had certainly not come across it in any book while she was learning French, should amuse her so greatly. Then she heard no more, the confessor was speaking and his voice smothered by the grating, snuffing and unintelligible by habit of prudence, came to Pepita like the babbling of an infant. *Nia, nia, nia.*

He must be reproving her mother, judging by the way she was crouching down with her head on her breast, seemingly crushed by the priest's interminable droning. Once more Pepita heard her mother's voice.

"It is true, Father, the fault is mine—but it is such cruel slavery! I was not born for this. You know well enough that my vocation lay in another direction. But youth always deceives itself, and I was such a child then!" . . .

She was silent, and once more the murmured *nia . . . nia . . . nia . . .* recommenced like the distant beating of wings, but still in tones of reproach and long drawn out.

"Do you believe, Father," asked Doña Cristina, "that I have done nothing to bring him into the right way? The happiest day of my life would be that in which I could see him by the side of holy people, helping God's work with the goods that He has given him, and taking counsel from people as wise and as virtuous as yourselves. But, Father, you do not know him, he is unapproachable, I have always felt as much fear of him as respect. I repeat it, I was not born for this, men are repugnant to me."

Once more the *nia . . . nia . . . nia* was audible, but this time it was imperious as if it were giving an order, and Doña Cristina crouched before the grating, ready to obey her director but overwhelmed by the sacrifice he imposed upon her.

"I will do it, Father, I will do it, but if you could only know the disgust I feel! But I will obey you, as there is no other remedy. You are right, I ought to have thought of this before I married. These are sacrifices imposed by God for the continuance of the world, exigencies of vile matter. But I will obey, Father, but oh! what it costs me! what repugnance I feel, My God!"

This time the expression of the *nia—nia—nia* seemed questioning.

"Yes, Father, yes; I will be another woman. I will once again as in the days of my vanity occupy myself with my worldly surroundings. I trust that I shall be rewarded for this sacrifice in Heaven. I will practise all worldly seductions to serve God."

The confessor's murmur continued for some time,

he seemed to be giving her advice, now and again Doña Cristina interrupted him assenting as a submissive penitent, "I will do so, Father."

Nia—nia—nia?

"I have forgotten all about such things, but I will try and recall my days of vanity."

Nia—nia—nia?

"Do you insist on its being this very day? After I shall have received our Lord? Very well—since you say so. It will be a fresh sacrifice."

Both confessor and penitent were silent for a moment, Doña Cristina turned her head as though she were resting a little before beginning the second part of her confession. Seeing Pepita so close, with her innocent eyes devoutly fixed on her prayer book, she once more bent her head towards the grating and the young girl could now hear only a distant whisper but was unable to distinguish a word.

When she had ended her confession the mother went to kneel in the nave of the Church, and Pepita took her place. She had only a short time to wait. The confessor despatched the penitent on the opposite side very quickly, and again the small window on her side was opened.

"Well, little lady, is that you?" he said affectionately to Pepita. "Have you already performed your act of contrition? Very well, and now for these little sins, and to cleanse the soul, for Padre Pauli is here to absolve all little girls who are good and submissive."

While the girl with automatic regularity recited

the usual sins, gossiping during visits, untruths of no importance, desire to humiliate her friends, disobedience to her mother, she looked at the famous Jesuit through the bars and recognized the well known features, the face without a wrinkle, the aquiline nose, that gentle smile which seemed like a caress yet was as an irresistible magnet to draw out the truth however deep it was hidden.

"Good—and what else?" asked the Jesuit when she stopped as an intimation that the enumeration of her sins was ended.

"Nothing more, Father. I cannot remember any other sins."

"Search your conscience well, little daughter. Has nothing new occurred in your life since the last time we saw each other? Think about it. Remember that deceit is of no avail with Padre Pauli; for a little bird comes to tell me all that deceitful girls do, and I know when they tell me the truth or when they lie."

Pepita began to feel very uneasy as she looked at the confessor's questioning and cunning smile. Her mother always said that man guessed everything. No beating about the bush was of any use with him, and her uneasiness rapidly turned to fear when she saw that the priest had ceased to smile and was speaking with his eyes turned up to heaven, in the same solemn tones with which he swayed the select crowd of faithful from the pulpit.

"Listen, my daughter. Once a princess far more beautiful than you are and far richer, for her parents were kings, deceived."

He described the ideal princess, not omitting any detail of her clothing, or of her carriages, or of the gallants who fluttered like butterflies around her.

“One day at a court ball where she was attracting universal attention by her beauty and elegance, while she was dancing with the son of another king, the courtiers suddenly gave a scream of horror. Out of the princess’s mouth there darted, then drew back only to appear again, a horrible serpent! Do you know what that disgusting reptile was? It was a sin the princess had wished to hide from her confessor, which had taken this form so that it might abide with her.”

Padre Pauli spoke with the cavernous voice of a preacher who wishes to terrify his hearers, and it made the young girl shiver. The end of the story was not more reassuring. The serpent ended by biting the princess in her heart and the unhappy girl descended to the infernal regions with all the weight of her sin on her soul.

“Come, my daughter,” continued the confessor after a pause during which he recovered his smile after the horrifying story, “you are a better girl than the princess; you surely do not wish to lose your soul by hiding your faults from your confessor. Here you have Padre Pauli who is so very kind to girls who do not lie, but who has a lash to punish those who are rebellious and wicked. Come, Pepita, speak to me as to one of your girl friends, you know that it is just as though I were one. You have a lover!”

"No, father," said Pepita, her voice trembling in her endeavor to defend herself. "He is a friend, a friend, one who is a little different from the others, for whom I have a little liking. . . ."

"That will do for the friend!" exclaimed the confessor kindly. "And this friend has written you little notes, and you have answered them stealthily, concealing it from your mother. Do not deny it, do not tell a lie. You are silent? Then we may assume that these letters exist and that you have seen him and spoken with him in the garden of Las Arenas. You see it is useless to deny it. I know it all from that little bird."

The Jesuit insisted complacently on that old story of the bird, as though it were a supreme flash of ingenious cunning.

The girl ended by confessing everything and then Padre Pauli spoke in solemn tones:

"Then, my daughter, I am obliged to tell you that you have committed a grave sin, but you are in time to repent of it, and to purify yourself from it. You have sinned no doubt not knowing what you did, because you are a good girl, and I trust that repentance will admit you once more to the grace of God. Do you know the gravity of your fault? That a little doll like you, an inexperienced child who ought still to be tied to her mother's skirts and who should not know a word of what goes on in the world, should wish to settle her future for herself, to deceive her mother, listening to the proposals of a man without knowing whether this may be agreeable to her par-

ents or to the good counsellors who surround them! Really you deserve a whipping like those ill brought up ragamuffins when they commit some devilry." And his white hand waved behind the grating playfully threatening.

"You who are fond of reading like all girls of the day; ask your mother for a book entitled 'The entry into the world.' If she has it not, your cousin Urquiola who most assuredly knows it by heart will give it to you. It is a little work by Padre Bresciani, translated and edited by other Fathers of the Company who are no less wise. We always present it to the young men who leave the University of Deusto when their education is finished. It is a complete guide to all a young Christian ought to do or to think out in the world. He who follows it literally needs nothing more to become a model of a catholic gentleman and a good father of a family. Read that book, Pepita, especially look up the chapters entitled 'The choice of your state' and 'Before your marriage,' and you will see what it is fitting for young Christians to do to save their souls and not to offend God. For the choice of your state or profession, you must meditate for a long time, fixing all your thoughts on God and on the most holy Virgin, as our most blessed and glorious fellow countryman St. Ignatius Loyola sets forth in his 'Spiritual Exercises.' The wife ought only to be chosen after prayer, meditation, careful examination and especially—and mark this well my child! 'after the mature and repeated advice of your prudent friends, of your masters, and above all of

your spiritual director,' that is what the book says."

The confessor repeated the words about the "spiritual director," as if he were the most important among all those named.

"And who is the spiritual director?" he continued. "The little book tells you this clearly. 'He is a second father given you by the Church, that he may direct your soul.' Let yourself be guided by this faithful friend. If your parents oppose your marriage, believe that it must be for your good, but if any vestige of doubt remains in your heart, submit it to the prudent examination of your confessors, and if these oppose it, you must resign yourself. Love in itself is nothing more than worldly gallantry, invented by poets and novelists in defence of a sin which should never dominate a Christian soul. There, little girl, you have a compendium of wisdom which is followed by all our young men when they leave our halls, and they are happy. And do you dare to attack this, you ignorant little doll? Do you dare to seek a husband on your own account, when men who bear Academic titles do not venture to cast their eyes on a woman without coming first to say to me, 'Padre Pauli, I have thought of so and so, will she suit me?' And they leave quite satisfied with the advice given and they follow it faithfully. Ay! Pepita! Pepita! How evident it is that your house is wanting in pious direction, even though your mother is almost a saint; how surely it is seen that in your family there are misguided men, like that crazy doctor up in the mines who has made his poor wife so unhappy; and

that people of all classes enter the house bringing with them the impieties of the age."

The young girl was overwhelmed, recognizing at once the enormity of her fault. The confessor went on with a little smile, "And this engineer who has turned your brain, he is probably more or less like your cousin, the doctor."

"No indeed, Father," Pepita hastened to reply, taking advantage of the opportunity of defending her lover. "He is a very good catholic, he told me so the other day when we were talking in the garden."

"Hum—Hum," coughed the Jesuit, "where has he studied? Probably in one of those schools where only what they call science is taught, which is really nothing but pure materialism. A catholic and I do not know him? A young catholic and he does not come here?"

"He has promised me he will come Father, and that he will confess here, that he will write his name among the faithful and that he will do everything I desire. Believe me Father, he is not at all wicked."

"Well, well," laughed the confessor maliciously, "the resolution is not a bad one, but these conversions at the eleventh hour in view of matrimony one always looks upon with distrust; they always produce bad results. Padre Pauli is too old, and knows too much of the world to be easily deceived by an artless young man of the modern school. And you my daughter, with what warmth you defend this man! I see the danger is more deeply seated than I had thought. If you persist in this wicked passion,

against the will of your parents and of your spiritual director, you will be in sin and I shall be unable to give you absolution. Do you understand me?"

The poor girl trembled at this threat delivered in such an impressive manner.

"But you are a good girl," continued the confessor changing his tone, "and you will be obedient. Tomorrow you will send me all the letters you have had from this man, just a little parcel addressed to me to be left with the porter at the Residencia. And this very day, I will take no excuse whatever, you will write to this individual, 'My dear Sir, in order not to vex my parents, and by the advice of my spiritual director'—any how, you will write it nicely, women are clever at that sort of thing, but the chief thing is to make him understand beyond the possibility of doubt that everything is ended, that you already think no more of him, and that the past was a fault of which you have now repented. Are we agreed?"

Pepita nodded her head affirmatively with tearful eyes, but the confessor could not quite tell if the emotion was caused by sorrow at the dismissal of her lover, or by the fear inspired by her fault.

"You silly, silly little girl," said he to quiet her, "It is all for your good! Who is this man? A nobody. An engineer like so many others, a workman in a frockcoat, who requires protectors like your father to earn his daily bread. See for yourself, would it be fitting for the daughter of Sanchez Morueta to marry a kind of porter? The stories of

princesses marrying shepherds are only heard of in plays now-a-days. It is early yet to think of marrying you, but when your time comes, obey your parents, and especially your mother, for women know more about these things. Confide in Padre Pauli who is your friend and your second father, and you will see that amongst us all we shall choose a man for you who will make you happy and even raise you up in the world."

The Jesuit was silent for a moment, as though he were considering some decisive step.

"With so many very distinguished young men leaving our University who have great futures before them, a young girl like you deserves a great fortune or a great name. The fortune you have by the goodness of God who has poured his gifts on your father, but you ought to marry a man who has talent and a future, who should be in days to come a statesman covering himself with glory in serving God and his country. Your cousin Urquiola for example."

Pepita made a protesting gesture, "No, no, not him."

"And why not, little one? Have you anything to say against him? He is one of the brightest lights that has issued from our University. With a dozen like him Bilbao might be completely ours, and this place another Covadonga* from which we could undertake the reconquest of Spain which is now plunged in a liberalism which is nothing but libertinage and

* A battle in the 8th century between the Spaniards and Moors in which the latter were completely overthrown, Santiago himself coming to fight for the Spaniards. *Trans. note.*

forgetfulness of God. But I quite understand why you frown, it is nothing but the gossip and falsehoods at your evening parties, the backbiting of your friends, who find Urquiola's attractions so great they can speak only of him. Sometime or other I shall settle those evil mongers! . . . Do you know why they think so much of Fermin? It is because he will not even look at them, because they know that for a long time past with the honest and respectful love of a young Christian, he has had eyes only for you. It is because they envy you."

After this clever flattery of the young girl's vanity, the Jesuit resumed with infinite kindness and tolerance, "I do not say that Urquiola is a Saint, neither was St. Ignatius till he was illuminated by divine grace. You see he was a soldier, and that is saying everything. Urquiola is young and abounding in energy and this excess and overflowing of his strength he has placed at God's service. I do not say he does not commit his peccadillos, but you must remember, my daughter, that in this world we are not all the same, and that faults change according to the ways of life of the person who commits them—thus what would be a sin in a man living quietly in his house, becomes no sin in a soldier who has to fight and wanders over the world. Fermin is a soldier, fighting in a good cause, and certain things must be forgiven him. But you will see how he will change when he has a virtuous and Christian wife at his side. Fermin will surely be elected a Deputy at the next elections, he will make a name in Madrid, and

who knows to what he may not attain when the fate of this nation changes, as change it most assuredly will, unless God forgets us."

Pepita was silent, she made not the slightest sign either of approval or disapproval as she listened to these words. The Jesuit stopped, thinking perhaps he had gone too far—better rest on his oars for that day.

"Do not think I have any special interest," he concluded, "that it should be Urquiola who will make your life happy; for my part, if it is not this one, let it be another. There are numberless brilliant young men leaving Deusto who are the hope of religion and of their country. My wish is simply this, that you shall choose like all Catholic and well-bred girls without grieving your parents. You come of a Christian family and should follow their customs. Look at the example of your parents, they married with the consent of their families without any hesitation or quarrels, fortune has smiled on them and they are happy, and best of all, they have a charming consolation for their old age in you, who are as pretty as you are good, and who will not wish to embitter the last years of their lives."

The confessor spoke gravely without the slightest blanching, of the conjugal happiness of the Sanchez Morueta couple.

"That will do for to-day, I have told your mother that you ought to come here more frequently. We will consult later on about what will be suitable for you, as we have plenty of time before us. This

little soul has gone somewhat astray, and we must take the greatest care of it. It is settled then that you will send me those letters so that you may never again be tempted to read them, so to fall afresh into sin?"

"Yes, Father."

"You will write this very day to that gentleman, giving him plainly to understand that these follies are ended for ever?"

"Yes, Father."

"Very well, and now we can proceed with the absolution."

Mumbling his Latin, Padre Pauli blessed the girl through the grating, after which he thrust his hand out of the front of the confessional for her to kiss. As he opened the little window on the opposite side ready with a smile to greet the fresh penitent Pepita went off to kneel by her mother's side.

After waiting a short time they communicated and then, having recited their act of penitence, they left the church, nodding their heads to those friends who were still kneeling before the confessionals.

The motor started on its return to Las Arenas, following the shores of the estuary which seemed on fire with the blaze of the hot sun.

Doña Cristina smiled at the landscape, thinking it even more beautiful than on other days.

"Have you not noticed, Pepita, the inward joy one feels after having received our Lord? Tell me, have we not employed our morning well?"

As they entered the house the mother's face grew

grave, she felt she was approaching a danger she would prefer to avoid.

The two women shut themselves up in their bedrooms and Pepita spent whole hours with her pen in her hand, biting the end of it nervously, tearing up sheet after sheet of paper as no letter she could write satisfied her. At last she entrusted a sealed letter to Nicanora, begging her to go the same evening to the blast furnaces and deliver it to Don Fernando. All the inquisitive peasant woman's enquiries were useless, her young mistress was out of temper and would give no reply.

Doña Cristina remained invisible till dinner time. She several times called her maid, keeping her running hither and thither, carrying various folded dresses and sundry garments on her arm. All the servants exchanged looks of astonishment; something very extraordinary was happening in the house for Doña Cristina was turning over her long forgotten wardrobe.

When Pepita, frowning and out of spirits after her letter writing, came down into the dining-room, she could not repress her surprise as she looked at her mother.

"Why mother! how handsome you are! how elegantly you have dressed yourself!"

Handsome! Yes, that she certainly was with her golden hair carefully done up with some soft lace which made her mature blond beauty look attractively young and fresh. But, elegant? Perhaps, that, too, with her light silk dress of soft and hazy

colors, a beautiful dress which had come straight to Bilbao from a great establishment in the Rue de la Paix some four years before when she had not as yet turned her back on worldly vanities. But since those days she had grown much stouter and the bodice which was painfully tight across the chest seemed ready to burst as her bosom rose and fell. The skirt too, which had been full enough in former days had now to be adjusted with a scarf round the hips.

"Well! do you think I look well?" she said as she strutted up and down as pleased as a child at her daughter's admiration, who as she looked at this well remembered old fashion so unexpectedly resuscitated, wondered if she were looking at some strange resurrection.

As she moved about the room the audible rustle of her fine lace skirts and the perfume she had used generously caused Sanchez Morueta to raise his head from the newspaper he had been reading oblivious to his wife's presence.

"How do I look Pepé?" she asked with a smile that contrasted strangely with the trembling of her voice.

Her husband cast a rapid glance over the enticing splendor of her autumnal beauty.

"Not bad," and his eyes went back to his paper.

"I am going to be fashionable once more. I want to enjoy life before old age comes on and our daughter will now find a serious rival in me. What do you say to this Pepé?"

"You will do well," and he continued reading, though he did not know what he read as his thoughts were very very far away.

The dinner was constrained. Sanchez Morueta had returned from his last journey with a very gloomy face, which soon vanished however, giving place to strange outbreaks of temper and irritability.

He who had always walked about his house like a somnambulist, never noticing any of the details of domestic life or speaking a word to any servant, since the previous day had been grumbling at everything, clenching his fists as if ready to strike everyone who answered his questions.

Pepita was also sad, and as the silence in the diningroom weighed upon her, she asked her father about the life in Biarritz, trying to make him describe some of the gay toilets he had seen in that fashionable resort.

Sanchez Morueta did his best to answer and please his daughter, she was the only person who could disarm his ill humor, but he spoke with his head bent over his plate, to avoid looking at his wife who was seated opposite him. Several times his eyes had met Cristina's fixed upon him with an expression he had not seen in them before and this mute, almost imploring caress worried him.

After dinner he withdrew to his study. Cristina let some little time pass, but when the arpeggios on the piano told her that Pepita was in the drawing-room, she went with a firm step in search of her husband.

As she entered the study she noticed Sanchez Morueta's look of surprise as he thought it had been a servant's knock. She also saw the instinctive movement of his big hands to hide beneath other papers several little colored notes that he was perusing with a frowning face.

She recognized those letters, and by an association of ideas the phrase "*Mon gros loup cheri*" leapt to her memory. Scarcely knowing why, she felt a childish wish to laugh aloud at the giant of imposing aspect, to throw herself on his neck and repeat that phrase which God would make him understand, which surely must contain some magic mystery to gain possession of men.

"What do you want? What has happened?" he asked in astonishment.

Want? . . surely those eyes enlarged by her toilet pencil to which feminine instinct gave the fire which the lack of passion refused, those feline steps with which she approached amid the caressing rustle of her skirts could have told him.

When she was close to him, she knew not what to say nor how to begin, but calling action to her aid, she threw her beautiful white arms around the dreaded ogre's shoulders.

"Pepé, . . . Pepé!" she murmured in a soft voice like a gentle moan.

And her warm lips sought his in the depth of his patriarchal beard.

The big man hesitated for a moment, bewildered by the wave of feminine beauty which had thrown

itself upon him, by the enticing perfume which surrounded her, by the lovely lips upon his own.

But it was only the weakness of a moment that passed like a breeze. With his powerful hand he set the woman aside. She felt her cause was lost as she looked at those cold eyes which seemed not to see her, as though his attention, his thoughts, his very soul had passed above her to go far, very far away.

Then her husband's voice was heard in the silence of the room, laconic, sad and even:

"It is too late, Cristina, too late."

CHAPTER VII

ONE morning at about ten o'clock Goicochea was working in his office which adjoined Sanchez Morueta's study, when suddenly he sat bolt upright with surprise at seeing his employer enter.

Three days previously he had left for Biarritz informing his secretary that he would be away for a fortnight, and now, here he was back and with a look on his face that terrified the little man. What could have gone wrong, why had he lost his usual quiet gravity?

His voice was now an angry one, high pitched and trembling, and all his movements as he came in and stamped about the office were erratic. But what frightened the secretary most was that he talked a great deal and seemed to have lost his characteristic sureness and conciseness of expression, for now he was all hesitation one minute and then the next he would be giving orders in a torrent of confused words.

"Look sharp, Goicochea; tell them to take the luggage home that is downstairs, and tell them by telephone that I am coming at once . . . No . . . tell them I am not coming, not to expect me to dinner, I will go in the evening . . . Why are you standing there looking at me, like an idiot? Hey—

stop! don't run away so quickly. Look here, tell the Capi to come up! Call Don Matias, at once; hurry up!"

Goicochea left the room quaking, as he thought of the terrible day awaiting him. He knew the giant's character, very few tempests, but good ones when they came—as he said. It was only very seldom that he had seen his employer lose his temper and become enraged, but he had a vivid recollection of those outbreaks.

When Captain Iriondo came up he found Sanchez Morueta tearing, almost bounding, about the room like a caged wild beast, with his hands behind his back and his head bent. It was some time before he perceived Iriondo who stood hesitating on the threshold.

"Pepé, what is the matter?" asked the old sailor in the kindly tone of an old comrade.

"Nothing. Only my own affairs, don't trouble about me, go and ring up the mine and order them to search for my cousin Luis and to tell him to come down here at once."

"I don't expect, my good fellow, that it will be quite as quick as that. Gallarta is far away and you forget that Don Luis has his own affairs. . . ."

"I have said that he is to come at once!" roared Sanchez Morueta—"Tell him I want him this very instant; tell him I am ill, dying . . . anything you like, only he must come quick! . . . And Luis will come, because he loves me truly and is my only friend."

"All right . . ." growled the captain . . . "all the rest of us are as dogs."

Shrugging his shoulders he left the room, while Sanchez Morueta continued his pacing back and forth with great strides, his head down, as though he intended to butt the plans and models that were nailed to the walls.

Suddenly he stopped in front of the door of the adjoining room, looking furiously at his secretary who had hurried back to his desk to continue his work.

"Señor Goicochea, you will do me the—favor of leaving me immediately. I want to be alone, so go out into the sun, wherever you choose . . . to the devil if you like! Only get away at once."

He glared at the secretary in such a way that the little man, afraid that he would be hit if he hesitated to obey, seized his hat and hurried out as fast as ever he could.

The offices were as quiet as the desert, not a sound coming from the small army of clerks who not knowing what might happen next kept their heads bent low over their papers, as through the doorway they heard that furious voice piling one upon the other orders, interjections and oaths in a most extraordinary manner for one who had always been so silent and self-possessed.

In the private office a quiet now followed these outbursts like that of a house where someone lies sick. Sanchez Morueta tired out with walking back and forth, back and forth for a full hour, at last threw

himself into a deep arm chair after touching an electric bell.

A frightened office boy immediately appeared.

"Bring me a cup of coffee . . . see that it is very strong."

When the coffee arrived, Sanchez Morueta was smoking an enormous cigar, one of his famous Havanas sent direct from Cuba, made especially for him and ornamented with his name and portrait on the gold paper wrapper.

Another hour passed without a sound from the inner office. Then he again touched the bell and the boy answered.

"Bring me another cup of coffee."

Sanchez Morueta was smoking his third cigar as was evident by the ends that he had thrown at his feet on the highly polished parquet floor. All the windows were shut as he had found them on arriving and the room was heavy with smoke.

Some time after mid-day when all the clerks had noiselessly slipped away to dine at their homes, the bell for the third time summoned a boy.

"Tell the captain to come up," he commanded.

"The captain is not here, Sir," replied the boy.

For the first time it occurred to Sanchez Morueta to look at the big clock on the chimney piece. How time had passed! And more from force of habit than from hunger, like everyone else at that hour, he wanted something to eat.

"Go round to the Swiss Café and bring me some

lunch. Whatever they give you . . . or whatever you think of. Above all, bring a cup of good coffee, don't forget."

When the boy reappeared carrying a large tray covered with dishes and shining silver the atmosphere of the room had become even thicker, Sanchez Morueta was still smoking motionless in his chair, with his eyes seemingly fixed on some very distant spot.

He scarcely touched the dishes placed on the table. He drank a little wine, tasted the fruit, and finally fell back on the coffee and then signed that the almost untouched meal should be removed.

"Look, my son," he said with unexpected gentleness, "take all this away and eat it yourself, and may it be for the good of your health."

When he was again alone he lighted another cigar, still remaining motionless in the arm chair, in which he seemed to sleep with his eyes open.

Sanchez Morueta never quite knew if he had really fallen asleep. It seemed to be a gentle doze in which he did not lose sight of what surrounded him, yet, time slipped by unnoticed as he sat in the apathy of one who thinks of nothing.

When towards evening Doctor Aresti entered the study the millionaire sprang up, returning suddenly to the realities of life.

"This place is like an oven!" cried the doctor, "One cannot breathe here, what a smoke, it is like a fire!"

And he went to the windows opening them wide to

disperse the cloud which surrounded his cousin.

"What is the matter?" asked Aresti as soon as he could breathe in some comfort. "What has happened to you, Pepé? Are you ill? Let me look at your face." He could not repress a start of astonishment when he saw his cousin's countenance. Most certainly, something very bad had happened. He appeared suddenly to have aged by ten years, his cheek bones were much more prominent than usual, his eyes were deep sunk, his whole face wore an utterly sad and dejected expression, and he showed great physical fatigue as though he had not slept for several nights.

"Now let us hear, what is the matter with you? Tell me my son, tell me."

Sanchez Morueta felt as though all his hidden wounds were being suddenly and painfully reopened. His cousin's presence awoke all the painful thoughts that had been slumbering during his overpowering drowsiness.

"Ay Luis!" sighed the giant in almost childish tones, seizing his cousin's hands. "My life is ended. They have killed my illusions, they have gone—they are all fled!"

And he sank leaning on Aresti, almost overpowering the Doctor's slight stature with his immense frame.

"Courage, Pepé! what is all this that causes you to droop like a fainting girl? Sit up . . . by God; I shall have you beginning to cry like the children soon! Come along! Calm yourself, and then tell

me all your troubles. Let us know why you think your life is ended, when you are the child of good luck."

Just as Sanchez Morueta was about to speak Aresti interrupted him, "I don't know if it concerns you much," he said, "but your young engineer Fernando is outside waiting to see you. I met him at the Desierto station, and hearing that you had come back he came with me. He wants to speak to you and says he has been impatiently expecting you."

Sanchez Morueta with a gesture showed his irritation. "Let him wait—probably something urgent at the Foundries." But what did blast furnaces, or mines, or ships matter to him now? Let them all perish, let evil fate carry them all off. . . . Of what use was wealth to him! And he rolled his eyes furiously over the plans and models as if he were cursing all his industrial power, holding it responsible for his misfortune.

At that moment he hated the young man who was waiting in his offices—Youth! detestable youth! That young engineer had no other means of livelihood than what he gave him, and yet with his youth and his girl's face with its little moustache, things would not happen to Fernando as they were now happening to him with all his millions. Good God, what was the use to him of all his money!

Aresti was getting impatient.

"All right, my good fellow, leave that youngster in peace. If you do not wish to see him at once, let

him wait; but now tell me, what has happened to you?"

"Judith," groaned the distracted man, "you know who I mean . . ."

He hesitated before continuing, seeming ashamed to reveal his sorrow.

"Yes, Judith,"—said Aresti encouragingly "that Frenchwoman, or Jewess or whatever she was, about whom you spoke to me so warmly—the mother of that beautiful boy . . . the son of love . . . I am interested. And what has the said Judith done? Has she paid you some bad compliment? Have you surprised her with someone? Has she run away and you do not know where she is? Speak, man, tell me without fear, you know that I am your confessor, and nothing that you could tell me would surprise me."

Aresti spoke calmly, for in truth he had long expected what his cousin was about to tell him. He had all along felt sure that his love story developed in late middle age was bound to come to a sad ending.

Sanchez Morueta began slowly as if it were a deep pain, a profound wrench to disclose his sorrows. But the first pain over, he became more animated, speaking with warmth and anger, finally revelling in the bitterness of his misfortune.

For the first time he had felt the torments of jealousy. For some months past he had been much depressed, and had given way to outbursts of irritation and temper very foreign to his real character. Had not Aresti noticed this?

He had often taken a train to Madrid to arrive unexpectedly as a surprise at the little house, the illegal and mysterious nest of his happiness.

Several anonymous letters had warned him of Judith's infidelities, probably from some kind soul who knew of her happiness and wished to disturb it, or possibly from some old companion of the *divette* who was envious of her luxury. So this great prince of industry, the owner of millions, who had thousands of men under him and mighty fleets on every sea, for months had lowered himself to a life of spying, of miserable subterfuges, to assure himself of the truth of the accusations sent to him.

"Ay! such is love, Luis!" he exclaimed. "How small it makes us! How it lowers us when it comes at an age when we love without the certainty of being loved in return! Now I feel humbled and ashamed of the things to which I had to stoop—And if it were only this!"

The last summer, Judith had gone as usual to a chalet he had bought for her in Biarritz, for in this way he could have her closer to Bilbao; and there he had become convinced that the mysterious warnings had not deceived him.

They had referred to a certain person of cosmopolitan life named Monsieur Jules—a handsome and well dressed young man of doubtful habits. An adventurer who spent his winters on the Côte d'azur, acting as croupier to the casinos in Nice, Mentone and Monte Carlo and who went in the summers, to the fashionable watering places in the Pyrenees.

Judith appeared to have known him for a long time. He was younger than she was and with the ardor of a woman who recognises that middle age is approaching, she had attached herself to this man who made his good looks a profession and who allowed all the adventuresses in his summer haunts by all manner of favors to vie with each other for the honor of his acquaintance.

After Sanchez Morueta had read the anonymous letters, he remembered having heard Judith in confidential moments mention this man's name as that of an old friend. He knew in addition, that the adventurer had paid several long visits to Madrid, filling his still warm place as soon as he had started on his way back to Bilbao. Now he also understood Judith's constantly increasing requests for money, her longing for wealth—to "secure her position" as she put it, with an ever increasing voracity, as though some unseen mind were prompting hers.

Sanchez Morueta did not regret his generosity. What could that stream of money which made no impression at all on the great flow of his fortune, signify to him as long as it made her happy! But what made him furious was the ridicule with which the situation covered him; that he, Sanchez Morueta, a man in the full vigor of life, feared and respected by so many should be turned into this grotesque and drivelling dotard, deceived and fleeced, like the stock personage in all the Parisian plays. He had been *le vieux* that the happy and loving pair had laughed at, while they joyfully appropriated his bank notes.

Good God! and to think that from respect to the name he bore, and from fear of his family and those cursed social conventionalities, he had come out of the wretched adventure without killing either of them! . . .

“Now then, my man, sit down,” said the doctor, worried at seeing him rushing about the room like a madman—“Do not smash the furniture—I know that you could break this table with a blow from your fist. You have not killed either of them and probably it was just as well. Do you think you are the first or shall be the last who has been gulled by one of these birds of passage? Go on with your story, go on—”

It was some time before he could calm himself sufficiently and when he recommenced his story he plunged at once into the final scene of his love tale, his last interview with Judith, two nights previously in the little house in Biarritz where he had spent his happiest days.

Sanchez Morueta had arrived unexpectedly, surprising Monsieur Jules practically occupying his place. The surprise had not been complete, for he had not seen him, he had only guessed his presence from the disorder of the room, from the details which betrayed a precipitate flight while Judith's maid detained him talking outside the locked door.

Afterwards the scene between himself and his mistress had been horrible. Oh! the wicked woman! what cruel frankness she had shown! What a wish to end everything at once, to place before him in its

complete nakedness the abnormal and repugnant situation. She might have gone on deceiving him; denying everything once more, keeping him in the happy ignorance which lulled him and robbed him of all strength to search out the truth. Once in Sanchez Morueta's arms in speaking of her former life she had said "We live on lies, but the deception is sweet." But now she would lie no longer; she was in love with her Jules, frantically in love, with the wild jealousy of one who sees younger women quarrelling for her prize, and to bind him to her for ever, to legalize her situation she did not hesitate at throwing over the rich lover, crushing his very soul with her cynical frankness.

Oh! how she loved that brazen-faced adventurer solely because he was young and handsome! With what insolence she had declared her passion! Sanchez Morueta writhed with fury as he recalled the scene. He could see her angry eyes full of insolence and could still hear her wild disconnected words in that international jargon which had so amused him in the early days of his love.

"Yes, *mon vieux*—I both love and esteem him, and with love *on ne badine pas*—If you love me, well and good—but you have no business to torment me with jealousy, you will have to be friendly with poor Jules. If not, the door stands open, and perhaps that will be best. *Voilà.*"

The cynical proposition made the giant roar and clench his fists with murderous fury as he repeated the scene. She, the cursed woman! had been as cold

as ice and as insolent as a woman could be while she stood there with her insulting looks, her tightened lips, her whole expression one of defiance.

"Yes, strike me, that would be so very Spanish. . . . Kill me as you kill women in your country when they have ceased to love you. Go on, Don José, we have come to the last act of Carmen. Where do you keep your knife?"

He had suddenly felt all his fury vanish. He recognized his weakness, his impotence in face of that woman hardened by the perils of her wandering life, and he had wept, wretched creature that he was, imploring her not to abandon him. He even thought he remembered falling on his knees and clasping her feet in desperation at the thought of losing her.

Sanchez Morueta told his tale with bent head in a smothered voice, like a criminal confessing his crime. He had been a wretch. He was disgusted with his own weakness and the tears he had shed the whole night through on that woman's shoulder.

But she had pitied the giant's distress and the poor patriarch's miserable face, she had taken his head upon her bosom and gently stroked his beard, gratitude and pity at last had induced her to give him some sort of mournful consolation. He must take life as he found it and accept things frankly, without asking impossibilities. Everyone fell in love when their time came. He being almost an old man had loved her, why, then, should he be surprised that she being young had also had her moment of weak-

ness and had fallen in love with Jules who was so irresistible to all women?

She had struggled to free herself from poverty—everyone must work in his own way to assure his future without thinking of the heart. But afterwards with luxury had come the sweet folly of love. He had done the same thing, spending his youth in the pursuit of wealth only to fall in love like a youth at a time of life when others have no longer any illusions left. Ah! *mon vieux*! One must take life with philosophical serenity—We each have our day.

Why could he not accept the situation as others did? They could still all be happy, and the three could live in blessed peace respecting each other. She did not forget that thanks to him she was possessed of a good fortune, she was a kind woman at heart and would do all she could to prevent her protector from suffering. But he still pleaded in a choking voice, "Love me only, me only," and Judith had waxed angry: *Grosse bête, va!* What he asked was impossible. She could not part from the man she loved, neither was she going to tell lies, she had a heart.

The doctor interrupted his cousin who was taking a sort of painful pleasure at detailing all the tragedy of that night.

"How about the child? How about the child of love?" he asked ironically.

Sanchez Morueta's eyes begged for mercy, he remembered the warmth with which he had spoken to Aresti about the little one, the words he had used

in describing the child's beauty recurred to his memory, "A true child of love, so beautiful, not in any way like me."

"Do not laugh at me Luis, it is cruel—you have guessed it at once. That illusion also has vanished. Nothing is left . . . nothing. . . . That woman has not left the slightest trace of her passage through my life. She has carried everything away . . . everything."

He remembered how for the second time he had felt that murderous impulse when he saw the mocking smile with which she greeted his enquiries about the little one. Oh! the cruel woman! How completely she had demolished his last illusion, telling him plainly the child was no son of his, and comparing his delicate beauty with that of the vicious rake who filled her thoughts. What a terrible stab in his heart that! But this time Judith, in spite of her insolence, had felt afraid at the despair of "son vieux." What a woman, what an inexplicable and unconquerable character! She made a merit of her very cruelties. She might have kept her millionaire under the illusion as to his paternity of her child and have continued to accept his gifts; indeed her lover had advised this, but she was really a good sort, and did not care to deceive him when the hour for explanation had come. She even thought her old protector ought to be grateful to her for the cruel confession. No—the child was not his son, and she repeated this with evident satisfaction, as a means of establishing her rights to the man she loved, plac-

ing the little one as an eternal bond between her and "the lover of her heart."

Sanchez Morueta had left the house with his heart crushed by these cruel discoveries. Neither love, nor son! Only the conviction of the wreck of everything, the misery of having believed in a happiness that he had forged for himself by self deception, a deep wound in his dignity and the gnawing of the ridicule in which he had lived during the many years which he had thought the happiest of his life.

He had wandered all day about Biarritz as in a dream, but the next evening his loving desire overcame his will and unconsciously not knowing whither he went, he had suddenly found himself knocking at Judith's door.

But it was in vain. No doubt she had feared another scene like that of the previous night and was weary of struggling against the appeals of a despairing love. No one answered his knocks—Judith had fled with her lover and the child. Adieu for ever—the illusion of so many years had vanished without leaving a trace.

"It is better so," said the doctor.

"Yes, it was best for her to go away."

He was ashamed as he thought of his weakness that second night. He guessed that had he once more seen Judith, he would have overlooked everything and would have accepted a vile situation in exchange for the preservation of some of his old illusion, a shadow of the happiness to which he clung.

There was a long silence. After Sanchez Morueta had ended his tale he sank into his arm chair, weak and overwhelmed. It seemed as if in laying bare his painful recollections the weariness of the previous wakeful night and the faintness of hunger had suddenly overpowered him.

"And now—what do you think of doing?" Aresti questioned.

"How can you ask me that," he answered with deep discouragement. "How do I know! I cannot think. Tell me, you, who know more of life, since last night I have had no wish but to see you, and time seemed long till I could get here and send for you. You are all that is left to me . . ."

With imploring eyes he looked at the doctor who shrugged his shoulders, rather doubting the efficacy of his remedies to save his cousin.

"I feel ill, Luis," said Sanchez Morueta complainingly. "I know myself. This trouble will not stop here, I shall feel its consequences for a long while. . . . What shall I do? What do you advise? By your life, tell me!"

He begged in despairing tones, stretching out his hands like a blind man who does not dare to move without a guide.

"What do you wish me to advise?" asked the doctor. "Anything I could say to you, could be said as well by anyone else—do you think of searching for this woman?"

A shake of the head answered him and then, "No—what for?" All that was ended. He could

never forget her, her deception pained him, but the very hatred with which he now regarded her was a sign he could not free himself from the remembrance of her. He would suffer in silence, and endeavour to cure himself. He would be a man, and in moments of discouragement the remembrance of what he had experienced would suffice to give him strength! But the loneliness of the existence that lay before him terrified him. How he dreaded the monotony of a life devoid of all illusions!

“Come along Pepé—you must not be a child,” said the doctor authoritatively. “You are not so alone, nor are you so wanting in affection. You will scarcely care for my advice, all the same I give it. Turn your eyes to your own house, try to attach yourself to your own family, try and make a happiness for yourself, try to imagine that your wife loves you, and even if this be not quite certain, it will be a less painful deception than the other, for you will know neither infidelity nor jealousy.”

Again Sanchez Morueta shook his head sadly. His family! His wife! This retreat had also become impossible through the fault of that wicked woman.

The gulf between him and Cristina had grown deeper, and he could hope for no reconciliation. In spite of his ardent love dreams, he had not mistaken the facts of that evening when his wife had come to him in his study. With the lack of reserve caused by his distress, he told Aresti of the scene with Cristina, the coldness with which he had met her caresses and afterwards of the stormy scene between

them, she throwing his infidelity in his face, he haughtily admitting the charge as a consequence of the moral separation in which they lived.

The doctor listened to him thoughtfully.

"Cristina sought you?" he enquired in astonishment. "Well then turn to her and you will find her. Do not be afraid of what passed between you. Either she sought you because a sudden affection for you had awakened in her, (which allow me to tell you would be very extraordinary), or someone had ordered her to do so—whichever way it may be, return to her, and she will accept you."

Sanchez Morueta looked at him hesitatingly.

"Return to her, man," continued the doctor. "It is the only solution I can offer you. I know that this is not much for you, with that longing for love that you feel as you grow older; but still it will be some help to fill the void in your life which terrifies you. If I stood in your shoes I would find plenty of ways to employ my activities. Oh! that I had your wealth and power!"

Sanchez Morueta divined his cousin's thoughts and received them with a contemptuous look. He ought to devote his life to those beneath him, to be a kind of saintly layman using his fortune, not in useless charities, but in emancipating the pariahs of labor—giving them the bread of education! He ought to found great schools and universities like other rich men of whom his cousin had often spoken.

Rubbish—what possible pleasure could that give

him with his profound selfishness, with no ideals beyond vanity and personal pleasure? He laughed at the doctor. Nothing in the world was of any importance but what immediately concerned him. If he with all his fortune was so unhappy why should such vermin be happier? . . .

Again there was a long silence between the two men—the evening was drawing on. The siren of a departing steamer made Aresti suddenly remember the engineer who had been waiting in the office for over an hour—

“Pepé, that youngster, I had best warn you so that you may not be taken by surprise, he has come to take leave of you. He is going away from Bilbao, he spoke of this as we came along here. He has waited some days to make up his mind, but he was anxiously looking for your return to tell you.”

“He wishes to go! and why!”

“How do I know? Some boyish affair. He thinks he cannot live here any longer. Possibly he may be suffering like you from love sickness. It would not be strange in him, for it is a thing that belongs to youth.”

Sanchez Morueta asked no more as from the doctor's smile he guessed it was something he would rather not know. Yet he felt somewhat happier at the thought that possibly that young fellow was suffering as he himself was. It was a selfish and cruel comfort to think that unhappiness came to all, regardless of years or of good looks. Accordingly he acceded to his cousin's request and sent for the

young man, "All right! let my companion in misfortune come up!"

Fernando would not sit down, he was in a hurry to return to the blast furnaces after losing so much time, he wished to fulfill his duties up to the last moment.

He came to say that he wished to leave, to resign his post as soon as his chief could appoint a successor. He kept his eyes on the ground as he spoke, fearing his secret would be read in his eyes.

Sanchez Morueta delayed his answer while he noted the alteration in the young face—Oh! that evil reptile had also stung him. He showed all its symptoms in his pallor and in the sadness of his face.

Then at once he felt for him the sorrowful fraternity of convicts bound for ever by the same chain.

"You are going, my son. . . . Is it any difficulty in the foundries? . . . Or possibly you wish to earn more? . . . If it is a matter of money—speak."

The engineer shook his head. It was neither difficulties nor the wish to earn more. He was tired of living there, that was all, and he felt a longing to see new countries. He would go to the Asturias or to Catalonia; or possibly he might embark for America; he had not as yet looked for a fresh appointment, but he cherished the hope of taking his mother with him to a better climate. That was his sole reason for leaving.

Sanchez Morueta noticing Aresti's smile and the young man's hesitation felt convinced that all this was untrue.

Sanabre continued, he was not forgetful of the great kindness his chief had shown him and he greatly regretted leaving him, but he had made up his mind to the separation and he would only delay his departure until another engineer was put in charge of the blast furnaces. In the meanwhile, he was at his chief's orders.

"You are going my son!"—Sanchez Morueta exclaimed with sudden emotion. "You know that I have loved you almost like a son—wherever you are if you want anything from me, ask, and if you wish to return, return—we shall not say farewell now. I shall go to see you and you will come to . . ."

The engineer raising his head, with sudden energy interrupted him. If he required anything of him as long as he was at the foundries he could give his orders by telephone. They could see each other again if Sanchez Morueta visited the blast furnaces, but if his employer was unable to go there, he would look in at his office before leaving. Sanchez Morueta made no remark at an intention so clearly shown of avoiding any visit to the palace of Las Arenas.

"Good-bye my son . . . till we meet again," said he clasping the young man's hand warmly.

When they were again alone, Morueta upset by so many emotions, sank once more into his arm chair.

"Everyone is going from me, Luis. This young fellow was another of my affections. It is complete emptiness all around me. And now when I return

to my house I shall find the coldness of an inn, an absence of all affection."

"No Pepé," replied the doctor, "I feel quite certain that you will now meet with what you have longed for in times past—most certainly your wife is waiting for you."

"And you? will you also abandon me?"

"No, never," said Aresti. "But I can serve you little—I am a man, and what you require it is beyond my power to give. You can only find the happiness of your life in your own house, now. But what I do not quite know is the price you will have to pay for it."

CHAPTER VIII

THE great man was ill—more than a month had elapsed since Aresti had been to see him for he did not wish to reawaken the millionaire's painful memories by his presence.

Now and then vague news reached him as to Sanchez Morueta's condition through the contractors at the mines. Don José never went to his office. Don José was ill in his palace at Las Arenas. It was not anything serious, loss of appetite, langor, he had tried to undertake too much, and his multifarious ventures had undermined his health.

This was the crisis he feared. "But as he does not send for me," the doctor told himself, "he probably has his reasons—that house must have changed greatly."

And so he remained in Gallarta, his mind made up not to visit his cousin until sent for.

A little later in Bilbao he met Captain Iriondo in the Arenal. The sailor seemed much surprised that Aresti should not have gone to see his cousin.

"It is not that I think he will die," said the captain, "but, my friend, he is in a very bad way. I do not know what can have happened to him for some time past. He does not eat, he is very depressed, and he spends his days in his arm chair letting him-

self be petted like a baby by his wife and daughter. He is only the shadow of what he was. The house, too, is greatly altered. Doña Cristina is a different woman, never have I seen her so gay—”

He described his friend's wife as beautified by a new-found youth, going about the house proudly, as if she had never before felt she had possessed real authority to direct things, dressed as fashionably as her daughter, all those dark clothes of former days being quite forgotten.

She nursed and petted her husband with the greatest affection and his eyes followed her coming and going about the rooms—eyes which showed the tenderness of gratitude.

“It is exactly as though they were lovers,” continued the captain. “I do not know what devils have been at work in this matter, but the two are quite different, completely different.”

Aresti smiled.

“Then,” he enquired, “is my cousin's house a nest of love?”

“Look here man—I will tell you,” replied the captain after a moment's hesitation. “I am very pleased to see them like this, so devoted, but I do not like all I see there. For example that presumptuous coxcomb Urquiola is now about the house at all hours, strutting about the rooms as if he were already the master there. Doña Cristina does nothing without consulting him. Again, you remember Nicanora, the old nurse? They have sent her home to her village with enough to buy a plot of land and a

couple of cows. I have been told that Doña Cristina turned her out after a very stormy scene. Pepita seems dazed in Urquiola's presence, she never had a strong will, her mother is throwing them together and you will see it will end in a wedding. That puppy from Deusto will probably become my Chief! Good Lord! and was it for this I risked getting my head broken during the siege!"

"And Pepé? What does he say?"

"Pepé has no will whatever. He speaks now less than ever, and to anything his wife orders he agrees by nodding his head. No doubt in his own heart he must think differently, but he does not dare to contradict his Cristina or to annoy her by putting a curb on that presumptuous cub. . . . I think you ought to go and see him."

"I? . . . He has not sent for me. Besides, this family picture does not attract me greatly. I am not wanted there."

"All the same, man, you ought to go. Pepé wants to see you, whenever I am there he asks me about you. He does not send for you . . . why I know not, probably in order not to annoy his wife. Very possibly he may have had it on the tip of his tongue to send for you and has not dared. You know the Capi is very outspoken—they do not love you there, they are afraid of you. I even think that officious Urquiola has thrust a doctor of his own choosing into the house. But poor Pepé thinks of you. Go and see him and you will give him pleasure—what in the world do your relations' sulky looks matter to you!"

Aresti stiffened as he heard all this. So then they were keeping his cousin in a kind of gentle confinement so that he should not see him, and they had called in another doctor as if he himself were dead. All right—he would go there at once. He felt curious to see this new found happiness at close quarters and he was inwardly rejoiced to think of the annoyance his unexpected appearance would cause those people. He would fall on Las Arenas like a bomb shell! Ha! Ha! Ha! and he laughed as he took leave of the captain to get into the street car.

When he arrived at Sanchez Morueta's house towards the middle of the afternoon, he found Cristina and her daughter with the irrepressible Urquiola in the drawing-room.

Before he entered, while the maid was announcing him, he heard the sound of voices speaking hurriedly, and afterwards a scurry of feet and the rustle of skirts in full flight.

"I will not see him," cried a smothered voice he thought he recognized.

As he entered the room there were evident signs that betrayed this precipitate flight, and his cousin's expression made him understand how inopportune she thought his visit.

The doctor felt that the ladies who had fled to avoid meeting him must be the Lizamendi and that the protesting voice was no doubt that of his own wife.

The interview was icy, Doña Cristina not making

the slightest attempt to conceal the antipathy she felt for the doctor. Her blue eyes stared at him disdainfully, why had he ventured to come there? Who had sent for him? For Doña Cristina now felt herself absolute mistress of the ground she trod. She stood apart on one side with her relations, and the doctor on the other. He was a hated stranger, for blood counts for nothing when hearts are separated for ever.

But the doctor disregarded what he knew to be going on in Doña Cristina's mind and spoke as if he did not notice the insolent little smile of the partisan of Deusto, or the surprise and terrified expression of Pepita who looked at him as if he were a ghost.

Aresti wanted to see Morueta, and Doña Cristina glanced anxiously at a door close by, evidently fearing the doctor would succeed in passing through it.

"I do not know if he will be able to see you," she said with tightened lips. "He is not feeling at all well and he does not care to receive visitors."

"Nonsense. We doctors enter wherever there are sick people . . ."

And without waiting for the lady's permission, he stood up and walked towards the door which led from the drawing-room to his cousin's study.

When he parted the curtains Sanchez Morueta gave a cry of delight.

"Luis! Luisito!"

And he stretched out his arms without leaving his chair, as Aresti embraced him. In truth the great

man seemed to be in anything but good health. He had grown much thinner, his beard was almost white, his eyes were deep sunk, his cheekbones stood out sharply from the drawn face, making the nose appear larger and heavier than ever.

He was reading a small book, which after the first moment's greeting he hurriedly hid in one of his pockets, lest Aresti should read the title of it.

Doña Cristina followed the doctor, standing close by the two men, watching their brotherly greetings with a frowning brow.

Aresti made his cousin explain all the symptoms of his illness. He understood all about it, it was nothing but a mental upset which had reacted on his whole organization. Quiet and comfort were what he required.

"A mental upset," echoed Doña Cristina icily. "May you always speak as truly. Pepé's life was too . . . agitated. But fortunately he is in good hands, and will be cured. As for quiet and comfort, he knows now how they can be obtained."

In order to cut short the interview she then reminded her husband that he ought not to talk much, that he must not tire himself and that he was best alone.

"Yes, but this is Luis!" said the giant, not daring to look at his wife. "I take the greatest pleasure in talking with him. I have so longed for him to come! . . . You see he is the only one left to me of my own family, and we are like brothers."

His humble voice seemed to apologize for this

affection, to beg his wife's pardon for a love that was stronger than his will. The humiliation of a husband who turns to his wife under the weight of a great fault, and who fears that at any moment his past may be brought up against him, was evident in every word.

Just at this moment Pepita appeared in the doorway making mysterious signs to her mother who followed her out of the room. No doubt the Lizamendi were departing and wished to take advantage of Aresti's absence to take leave of their friends.

When the two men were alone the doctor stepped close to his cousin. They would not be left alone very long and he wanted to know the real situation. How was he living now in his house? Was he happy? . . .

Sanchez Morueta could speak only of his wife.

"She is an angel . . . a real angel. You should see how she nurses me, with what affection she surrounds me. She still has her little domineering temper, but it is only in order to isolate me, to keep me always close to herself. I am a different man, Luis. This tranquility is priceless. I am like a man resting after a forced march; I do not dare to move."

But in spite of his happiness he seemed very timid, evidently guessing the fragility of this peace that surrounded him and which he feared to break by the slightest movement.

"And all *that*?" . . . enquired the doctor mysteriously. "Is all *that* completely forgotten?"

The big man turned pale as if he were awakening

to a sudden danger; he made a gesture with his hands as though endeavouring to disperse his cousin's words into space. He must not remember that, it caused him now both shame and disgust.

They were unable to say any more, as Doña Cristina now returned, followed this time by both her daughter and Urquiola. Having dismissed their friends they had come to the study to sit around Sanchez Morueta and to be between him and his cousin, plainly intending to prevent all communication between the two.

This move was evidently the doing of Doña Cristina who was anxious to make the doctor understand her wish to close the doors of the house for ever behind him. Aresti saw the eyes of all three fixed steadily on him saying clearly enough, "What are you doing here? Go—You are none of us."

The sick man acknowledged with a smile the solicitude with which they joined him and surrounded him, as if they feared he would escape. He looked complacently at his cousin. See how they loved him! Eh? How anxious they were not to leave him alone, and to make amends for all their former coldness! Oh! There was nothing like one's family! . . .

He even felt grateful to Urquiola. Indeed it was impossible to remain indifferent to that big fellow who called him "uncle" at every sentence, thus extending to Morueta his distant relationship to Cristina. It was he who gratified all the sick man's little wants. When Doña Cristina according to the

doctor's orders hid the cigars, it was Urquiola who searched for them and turning the prohibition into a joke, indulged his cousin with one.

Aresti smiled at the respectful solicitude with which he petted Sanchez Morueta, and anticipated all his whims. It was like an acolyte serving his priest.

Doña Cristina looked meaningly at the young man who was evidently hesitating how he should begin something that he had promised to carry out. Just then Urquiola's eye caught sight of the little book sticking out of his "uncle's" pocket and he immediately launched forth upon the merits of the work.

"Do you like it, Uncle? It is very profound is it not? But the second volume is even better."

And without waiting for a reply, Urquiola turned to Aresti as if it had been only on his account that he had spoken of the book. It was one of the most remarkable works that had been published during the century, entitled "Answers to all the most common objections made against religion," by Padre Segundo Franco, an Italian Jesuit of great talent. In this book all the lies circulated by the enemies of Catholicism were thrown to the ground, their false science which is nothing but pride, their fictions against the Inquisition and against all the great deeds of Faith that they represent as crimes. No one who read it could have any other course open to him but to be converted. Everything that the Church laid down was clearly justified in its pages, with that force of reasoning only possessed by the

Fathers of the Company. If any one still remained in error it was because he did not know that book.

"You ought to read it doctor," said the advocate of Deusto impertinently.

Aresti knew the book. He remembered having skimmed it through when he was living in the Lizamendi's house. It was a solemn monument of stupidity, in which the greatest absurdities were proved by arguments within the reach of any old devotee. Urquiola's inopportune advice irritated him.

"Young man," he said with contempt, "for many years past I have been in the habit of reading what seemed best to me, without requiring any advice."

Sanchez Morueta bent his head to avoid his cousin's glance; he seemed ashamed at the discovery of the book.

They all sat silent, while Doña Cristina and her cousin looked at one another. They seemed anxious to annoy and exasperate the Doctor, to provoke some explosion which would prevent him from ever again coming to the house. Cristina encouraged the young man with her eyes to start an argument.

Urquiola spoke of the great pilgrimage of the Virgin of Begoña which all the influential people in Bilbao were preparing for the month of September. It had cost a great deal to organize it, but it would be quite as beautiful a festival as that of the Coronation. The display would bring honor to the city and would help to restore its old times of grandeur.

Aresti had enjoined prudence on himself as he

divined his enemies' intentions, but he felt his fighting and rebel temper rising against this pious charlatan.

"And what times might those be?" he asked coldly.

Urquiola was delighted to display before Pepita and her mother that noisy oratory which had won him so many successes in the literary exercises at Deusto. It seemed to him quite impossible that a Biscayan could ask such a question! The times of the Lordship, when Biscay was independent, and was governed by its brave and prudent Jaunes. When the plague of "Maketismo" had not as yet invaded the land of the tree of Guernica;* when the Biscayans had made the Spaniards lick the dust at Padura, Gordeyola and Otxandino, in the same way that centuries after, in our own times, their descendants had repulsed the red trousered soldiers sent from Spain to crush out the last remains of their liberties.

Aresti smiled contemptuously. No doubt they had won the battle of Padura and the others against the Castilians! What a happy country! So wanting in history that it had to be invented by giving the importance of national glories to three wretched fights; three skirmishes with stones, knobbed sticks and hatchets, very little more than a free fight at a pilgrimage.

"No, Biscay has scarcely any history," continued the doctor, "and for this reason it possesses the energy of young countries. Its greatness is beginning

* The Judges of Biscay in very early days assembled once in two years under the presidency of their Lord under a very ancient tree at Guernica.
Trans. note.

now, only the enemies of everything modern will not see it. Its glories are recent. They are, its river, its harbor, its mines, its manufactories, the ships that carry its flag over every sea, the colossal strength of two mercantile generations who have robbed nature of her secrets. The Biscayans who in former times went in their little barques whale fishing, were worth more from my point of view than those hairy, clownish heroes who at Padura shouted 'Sabelian, Sabelian Sarrtu,' telling their men they were to strike the Spaniards in the stomach with their pitchforks. This is a country which in former times has produced only bishops and sailors. But now, the only notable men that this race under its peculiar conditions can produce are showing their genius. You see my cousin here who never dreams of historical glory, and who never troubles as to what those in the future will think of him? To my mind he is the real hero, the modern paladin. He has done more for the honor of Biscay with his industrial enterprises than the whole lot of those dirty long-bearded Jaunes."

Urquiola was silent, he was disconcerted by this eulogy and feared that any disagreement with it might be taken by his beloved uncle in bad part. But Doña Cristina came to his assistance.

"Do not be angry, Fermin. The doctor cares little about the holy traditions of Biscay. What annoys him is to see a whole people paying homage to our Blessed Patroness, in whom he does not believe."

Aresti shrugged his shoulders. None of these fes-

tivals annoyed him in the least, on the contrary they were to him very curious spectacles, in which he could study the longing for the unknown and for supernatural protection felt by ignorance and weakness. He gauged the demonstration of the approaching month of September at its true value. The religious element in it was of the smallest. The great unthinking mass would go up to Mount Artagan with the selfish desire to earn for themselves the Virgin's gratitude. But the true direction of the pilgrimage would be in the hands of those who dreamed of Biscayan independence and of the Jesuits who insisted on these displays as they feared the socialist propaganda in the mines and the anti-religious spirit among the workmen in the city.

When he heard the Jesuits mentioned, Urquiola jumped from his seat; now he felt himself on firm ground, it was as if his own family were being attacked, and he looked at the two women, inviting them to witness the castigation he was going to give this impious man sitting there before them. "What have you to say about the Jesuits? They are most learned, prudent, and excellent priests, who sacrifice themselves in order to turn others towards the path of virtue. They, following the glorious St. Ignatius, checked the infernal propaganda of Luther; it is they who stemmed the religious revolution and gave the Latin people the great blessing of escape from this contagion. They are the Pope's right arm, those who maintain Catholicism in all its purity. And learned! I myself know in

Deusto a Father who can speak five languages." . . .

Aresti interrupted him:

"I know waiters in hotels who speak many more languages, and yet an ungrateful world does not praise their learning."

Stung by this insult Urquiola raised his arm as if he were going to fall on the doctor, but he mastered himself immediately. He was there as an apostle and he intended to crush this impious man of whose science so many fools spoke with respect. He continued his eulogy of Jesuitism, speaking of its foundation as if it were the starting point of humanity. He knew all the calumnies hurled at the order. They were all lies of Free-masons who trembled with rage and fear before the sons of St. Ignatius! They spoke of the rapacity of the Jesuits, of their covetousness, of their desire to accumulate money—all falsehoods of the impious and of certain religious orders gnawed by envy, who did not see that in attacking the Ignacians they were undermining the strongest foundation of Catholicism. Tell him! where were those treasures? Who had ever seen them? And even if they did possess them, what then? As one of the Fathers of the Company so well said in one of his books, "The world would lose nothing by their being rich, as they spent all their money on education, in building colleges and universities." Then again, it was thrown in their face, that they sought intercourse only with the rich and powerful, educating solely those who were of high birth. And what was proved by that? . . . Equality is a myth

of the enemies of religion, for even in Heaven there are degrees and hierarchies. True, the Fathers do devote themselves to the culture of the upper classes, those who by their birth or fortune are destined to be leaders of men, leaving the great mass whom they cannot evangelize to the care of the priests of lower order. Being seized of the trunk they were sure to possess the branches; by educating the privileged classes in the holy fear of God, they maintained the religious spirit in the chief institutions, among the legislators, the magistrates, the army, founding the future far more solidly than if they sought out that ignorant and submissive rabble who were always ready to let themselves be deceived by absurd propagandas.

Ah! that rabble! with what disgust Urquiola spoke of that mass without will, which let itself be carried along by the false exponents of pretended science! He was furious as he thought of the blindness of that mob, who in all the conflicts of poverty turned against the priests and especially against the Jesuits. If a strike broke out, they stoned the convents of the Order, if they were marching along the street during a manifestation and chanced to meet a priest they hissed and chased him. At their meetings if they wished to insult one of their oppressors they called him a Jesuit. What harm could the Fathers possibly do to all those people who were clamoring for increase of wages or for shorter hours? The Fathers had neither mines nor factories, they were not masters of any industrial enterprises, they did not sweat

the workers. Why then did the mob turn against them? Would it not be more natural to leave the priests in peace and attack only the rich? Why mix religion in questions of labor? . . .

The advocate looked at Aresti with a superior smile, certain of having utterly crushed him by these arguments learned at Deusto and without noticing that in defending his masters he was attacking Sanchez Morueta.

The doctor felt intensely irritated by the young man's triumphant airs before the women who seemed captivated at his eloquence. He cast aside all scruples of prudence, conscious only of a longing to scandalize his devout cousin, to set forth his ideas without any consideration whatever for the consequences, and to slam the doors of that house behind him for ever! He spoke with a calmness, a gentleness in his voice that contrasted strangely with the radicalism of his thoughts.

He was not surprised that the army of poverty in its protests and rebellions should direct itself against the Ignacian priests, for even though these took no direct part in industrial enterprises, they were the directors and educators of the rich, they shaped the upper classes, moulding them at their pleasure. The shots of the despairing were not then so ill directed; they seemed at first haphazard and wild, but in reality they struck the true enemy. The disinherited, the unhappy, guessed with the instinct of desperation where lay the cause of their misfortunes. Society had for its basis Christian morality, a morality that

may have been very opportune in remote ages, but which had been wrecked in its contact with modern life.

The man of to-day ought to occupy himself with doing his work on the earth in modifying incessantly the natural and social atmosphere around him; but a Christian ought to attach no importance to a life through which he passes in such a transitory way, since his true life lies beyond death. For twenty centuries Christian morality has been on its trial, it has given forth everything that it contained, and its wreck is visible in every direction. It ignores justice on earth, leaving that for heaven. It stands indifferent to the rights of the oppressed, consoling them by the hope that in another life which no one has seen, they will find compensation for all their suffering. Its only clear formula is that of universal brotherhood, "love thy neighbor as thyself," yet it settles disputes by war, blesses the strong, declares that man is naturally sinful and corrupted and can only be purified when God grants him his grace. If that is not granted he lives outside of the blessed community, he is the child of sin, a diabolical creature who must be hunted and exterminated.

Urquiola and Doña Cristina stared at each other utterly scandalized.

"And charity," cried the advocate, "the sublime charity of Christian morality."

"Charity!" rejoined the doctor, smiling sarcastically, "it is the means of perpetuating poverty, of nourishing it and making it eternal. The poverty-

stricken hate it from instinct and do all in their power to avoid it, looking on it as a degrading institution which perpetuates their slavery. That is another of the great wrecks of Christian morality."

He reminded them of the malediction of Jesus on the rich, his promise that they should find it more difficult to enter the kingdom of heaven than "for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle." And yet every human being, ignoring Jesus' saying, seeks this danger of becoming rich; all would expose themselves to the flames of hell, if only they can lay hands on the goods of this world. The unfortunate in their rebellions make no mistake in hating a religion that requires the wretched to resign himself to his fate, and demands nothing more from the rich beyond a charity of which they are the sole judges, and that they can graduate according to their own selfishness. The submerged see that while faith has weakened below, it is above, among the rich, that religion finds its defenders in spite of God's curse upon them.

The privileged classes use religion as a shield. "It is no use expecting justice on earth for everyone. It is all in God's hands and one must go to the other life to find it." In the meanwhile the poor must be happy in their misery in the hope of gaining Paradise after death. Sweet illusion! Supreme consolation. How is it possible that the oppressed should not rise up against a religion which closes the path of justice and comfort to them here below, to give them in return only the chimerical hope of a divine justice that the rich can purchase by gifts to the priests?

Christianity had deceived the poor, keeping them in their wretched condition between the hopes of heaven and the fear of hell—the hatred of all religion was instinctive wherever the working masses were awakening.

Doña Cristina was fanning her crimson cheeks furiously. What horrors were being poured out by that gentle voice, which seemed to caress her while it made deep gashes! . . . How she repented having provoked that ungodly man! and she made signs to Urquiola not to answer him. She longed for a painful silence which would drive him from them, impelled by the contemptuous hostility of all his listeners. But the disciple of Deusto was afraid of appearing worsted before Pepita and he interrupted the doctor with exclamations of ridicule and horror. "He is mad, that man must be mad," and taking advantage of a pause in Aresti's denunciation he launched forth on the reply that he had been preparing. It was easy enough to criticise! But at least if the doctor found Christian morality so defective, he might have the kindness to tell them what his own views might be.

Aresti looked on the young man with pity. It was possible he would not understand him for these things were not taught in Deusto. Besides a morality with all its precepts was not evolved in a single night, like a sermon of the Fathers of the Company. Modern thought, though it had done enough in less than a century, was as yet only at the first stage on its march towards the infinite. But even so, its morality,

a morality for the earth without celestial sanctions, was advancing to the positive well-being of humanity and was taking form.

"And I," continued Aresti, "worship social justice as the end, and I believe in science as the means."

Urquiola burst into an insolent peal of laughter. Science! The modern science of revolutionaries and the Godless! he knew well enough what that was. So, science could serve as the medium and instrument of morality? Whatever the doctor might think, they were taught something of modern science in Deusto. They raised only a corner of the veil that hid such a mass of impieties, in order to crush them with the holy weight of sound doctrine. He knew a little about modern science, enough to appreciate its gross materialism which was incompatible with any lofty ideal and was the instrument of all demoralization.

According to that science man was a brute, and instinct replaced the soul; there was nothing about God who had formed the world, nothing about the spiritual life after the destruction of matter. Life's only scene was this earth. After death, decay, dust, and nothing. As no other life existed, there could be no punishments, so that everyone could act according to his instincts as best pleased him, without fear of God's anger. The brute was at liberty without any restraints! Why then deny ourselves the satisfaction of our appetites? Why impose on ourselves any restrictions with regard to our neighbor? We might laugh at our ancestors as fools because they ruled their passions by the hopes of heaven or

their fears of hell. As we asked no one to send us into the world, no one would require any account from us when we returned to our earth. Vice was the same as virtue, crime and goodness equal. We may live and enjoy everything we can without scruples, as no one will call us to account.

"Is that your morality, Doctor?" asked the advocate triumphantly. "Is not this what is taught by modern science?"

The two women showed their admiration for Urquiola by the looks of pity they cast on the doctor. Even Sanchez Morueta, who had listened quietly with his head bent, seemingly annoyed by a polemic whose intention he guessed, raised his eyes fixing them with astonishment on the advocate. The young fellow did not argue badly, he was not such a fool as he had thought him, and he wondered if his wife was right in praising his cleverness.

Aresti heard this sarcastic description of a society without God with an unmoved countenance. If religion were a curb to passions and deeds of violence, how was it that criminality was more frequent among ignorant and devout people than among those of higher culture? How was it that the greatest historical crimes coincided with the periods of greatest religious enthusiasm?

The doctor spoke in the name of science for whom crime and the lack of morality are only the results of ignorance or of a partial devolution of the brain.

The man who is emancipated by science concerns himself as much or more with the fate of humanity

than with the fate of an individual. He knows that he is a component part of one infinite family, he feels the solidarity that binds him to his species, and is certain that his thought will live even after the corruption of his brain. He is not satisfied only with the gratification of his feelings. For the same reason that he does not doubt that his body will perish for ever, he feels the necessity of leaving some trace of his passage through the world by good actions. Instead of longing to immortalize himself like the devotees in celestial bliss (a selfish longing which produces no benefit to others), he desires to survive in the species, which is eternal, endeavoring to give it whatever of well being or happiness he has been able to contribute by his life's work. Which morality is the most generous? The individual and selfish dream of a false and useless heaven is being replaced by modern man with the collective ideal, which is in accord with reason and which gives him the highest moral satisfaction.

"To do good to others," continued Aresti, "without hope of reward or fear of punishment, as we modern unbelievers, we materialistic men do, is surely being more idealistic than the worshipper who buys his share of paradise by prayers which remedy none of the evils of this world."

The doctor became excited and raised his voice as he compared the morality of the religious with that morality of high and noble thoughts which are unfolded beneath the quiet protection of science. How could one put on the same level the credulous egotist

who by a few sacrifices and mortifications thinks he can buy himself an eternity of joy in heaven, with the modern man who does good without thinking of future rewards, or of the favor of divine phantoms, but solely for the happiness of succoring his neighbor and because of that solidarity which ought to exist between all who man the wandering ship of earth. The actions of all great martyrs and great geniuses had sprung from this, and it was the morality of all the heroes of humanity.

Doña Cristina and her daughter listened to the doctor in astonishment, without making the slightest attempt to understand him. He was mad, all this was nothing but German philosophy, confused sophisms which the impious had invented to conceal their own wickedness, when it was so clear and simple to believe in God and follow what the Church taught. Oh! if only Padre Pauli had been there, who dealt such splendid blows at those philosophers from his pulpit! !

Urquiola hid under a contemptuous smile the perturbation and confusion of his mind at the doctor's words. Certainly not a word about all this had been said to him in Deusto, but furious at what he considered a defeat, and anxious to get out of his difficulty as he would have done in his electoral campaign by ruffianly abuse, he regretted the presence of Sanchez Morueta.

Aresti fired by his zeal could not keep silence. The religious sophism tolerating injustice on earth with no other consolation than the hope of a better

world, was too gross a fiction for modern intelligence. Morality did not consist as Christianity proclaimed it, in mortifying oneself, in self concentrated meditation, in crushing out natural instincts, in making oneself small enough to pass through the narrow way to celestial glory, but in accepting life as it is, and in loving it in all its fulness. Spiritual life was not the egoism of one individual only, but communion with the collective aspirations of humanity. Modern man ought not to lose his time enquiring as to the origin of evil or if nature has been corrupted by sin, which are the two great preoccupations of Christian morality. It is sufficient for him to know that nature, whether good or bad, can be transformed or modified by work. The origin of evil signifies little, the principal thing is to combat and overcome it without optimism or pessimism, taking as a continual guide the effort towards improvement.

Man no longer desires to found his morality on the unknown, on God, that phantom of the infancy of mankind, by turns either terrible or beneficent, neither can he tolerate Christian morality founded on resignation or abstention. That morality is no more than the act of mutilating life under the pretext of preserving its highest or so called spiritual forms.

One must accept life such as it is, and live it out thoroughly. Our morality is brave and simple, it resigns itself to the company of man and it accepts men as they are, knowing that angels do not exist. It does not spend life praying and contemplating

perfection, but throws itself in the way of evil and moral deformity, nay, even seeks them out as unfortunately they exist, to combat and overcome them. It does not look to heaven, for it knows there is none, but it examines earth which is a reality, and instead of folding its hands for ever in prayer to save its soul, it seizes the rude instruments of labor, works, struggles, sweats in its eternal battle with the soil to transform and beautify it, thinking that the wearisome labors of the present will be good works for the humanity of the future. Our morality has horny hands, not like those of a nun, white and soft, crossed on her breast while she raises her eyes to God.

Sanchez Morueta looked at his cousin with admiration. Ah! his Luis . . . What a man! His timid and wavering thoughts were carried along by the doctor's words; that tribute to universal activity excited his enthusiasm, for was he not a fortunate and privileged high priest of labor?

But his wife listened with compressed lips, growing pale as she saw the confusion of her cousin who could not grasp many of the doctor's ideas. With the aggressive instinct of a devout woman she interposed in the conversation, anxious to assist Urquiola.

"I do not understand that morality," she said to Aresti sharply. "It is nothing to me. I leave it to—wise-acres, like you. We, the brutes, are content with the Catechism. But as you interest yourself so much in the happiness of humanity, how is it that you do not remember your poor wife?"

She spoke with suppressed anger of the Lizamendi,

who when she came to see her had often wept as she recalled the past. She found herself in a difficult situation, neither spinster nor widow; she avoided speaking of her condition, almost concealing it, so that no one could think that the fault of the separation was hers. Doña Cristina was indignant. What would become of her! Poor little thing, so good, so religious, with the pure soul of an angel!

"And your morality leads to this," she said harshly, "to make a poor creature who is almost a saint unhappy."

Aresti was silent, he seemed dazed by the injustice of the attack. He! turned into the executioner of an angel! And that angel his wife, and Cristina could throw this in his face after having seen the humiliation which the Lizamendi had heaped upon him! . . . He preferred to bear the attack in silence, making no protest beyond shrugging his shoulders.

But Sanchez Morueta's wife did not look upon it in this light. Being once launched, she felt an intense desire to insult him, to bring about a pretext for an open rupture, so that he would never return to her home. "And now as you do not believe in any sort of religion," with a sweet smile that was like a knife she said after a long pause, "I suppose you do not believe in Jesus. What can our Divine Redeemer possibly be to you?"

With what joy Aresti spoke, slowly, in a soft incisive voice, as if he wished that each word were a blow on those blue eyes which looked on him so contemptuously!

"Jesus? He was a great poet, his was the poetry of morality. With all the tenderness of compassion, seeing the futility and the sarcasm of his sacrifice, I love the remembrance of him. His successors have perverted his doctrines, and have reversed them both in practice and in explanation. His assassination was a conspiracy of the constituted authorities, governors, rich people and priests, the same who to-day are his worshippers and who trade on his memory."

Doña Cristina rose to her feet in anger. She had listened to all the explanations about morality, though they were somewhat confused to her, and had kept calm, although she guessed that they were attacks on heaven and God. But this attack now struck at Jesus and made her furious, because even if he denied His existence, was that any reason for calling Him a poet? The Son of God a poet! To a wealthy woman like herself that seemed a refinement of insult!

"Do you hear, Pepé?" . . . She cried looking at her husband. "Do you allow such impieties in your house?"

Sanchez Morueta's timid eyes wandered between his wife and his cousin, as though his mental drowsiness was terrified by the unexpected clash.

"I am going," cried Doña Cristina, seeing her husband's hesitation, "I will not listen to this blasphemer any longer."

Turning to Pepita she added:

"Come, my child, let us go. You have heard sufficient abominations. Thank your father who allows

you to learn such horrible things in his house."

The two women left the study, Urquiola also got up doubtful for the moment if he should follow the ladies or stay and attack the doctor. This was the moment to present himself as a paladin of the faith, to make it a personal question in the name of Jesus—by the strength of his fists to make the doctor swallow that word "poet" which had made him no less angry than Doña Cristina. But the presence of Sanchez Morueta inspired him with caution, he feared to annoy his "uncle" and he ended by leaving the room in search of Doña Cristina and her daughter.

Both Aresti and Sanchez Morueta sat for a long while with their heads bent, overwhelmed by what had taken place. The doctor was the first to break the silence.

"Good-bye, Pepé," he said sadly stretching out his hand to his cousin. "I cannot ask you like your wife, 'do you allow this?' After all she is your wife, and you have to live with her."

"Do not go like this!" exclaimed Sanchez Morueta in dismay. "Certainly now you are angry and I fear you will not return. Do not quarrel with me. Cristina is like this, and what can I do to her? You yourself have said it. The family . . . the peace of the household . . . she is good and she loves me; but she has her ideas, and one must respect them in one's womenkind. But in truth you also spoke strongly."

"Good-bye, Pepé," said the doctor once more,

dropping the large hand which fell weak and nerveless. "May you be very happy."

"But we shall see each other again, eh? You will come and see me at the office? . . . This will pass, you know that you have quarrelled at other times."

"Good-bye. Good-bye."

And Aresti without listening to the excuses his cousin was making as he followed him, left the room, certain that he was leaving all his past behind him dead, certain that he had broken their fraternal relationship, certain that he had lost the last link that remained to him of his family.

CHAPTER IX

ABOUT the middle of August symptoms of disturbance and unrest were beginning to show themselves among the workmen in the mines.

Whenever the contractors of Gallarta saw Doctor Aresti at their evening meetings they always recounted to him these signs of rebellion present in the villages of the whole mineral basin. In La Arboleda the workmen were clamoring against the canteens, declaring that the foremen were the real owners of them and that those who did not go to them for their provisions lost their jobs. At Pucheta where the most violent miners lived, they had already used their knives one pay day in a fight over the refusal of two workmen to pay their debts at a shop kept by a protégé of one of the contractors. Plans were being heatedly formed for a great meeting in the principal square of Gallarta, so that at an assemblage of all the miners the question of a strike should be settled now that their petition for a weekly pay day had been rejected. From the band stand the "friends of the people" would make speeches, those agitators from Bilbao who, "now free from the yoke of their masters," as they never failed to describe themselves, spent their time in preaching socialist doctrines and in organizing the workers.

Pending the arrival of the proper moment for the predicted uprising of the oppressed, the representatives of the Socialist party in the mines, who were for the most part tavern keepers, as the doctor was assured, distributed the consolations of alcohol and revolutionary theories among the irritated masses.

With especial alarm the contractors took up the case of the apprentices in the mines, those young devils who always carried a knife handy in their belts and whom the miners themselves did not dare to chastise for fear of their summary vengeance. It was these mere boys who always formed the riotous vanguard in all the disturbances, compromising the men by their insolence and forcing them to go further than they intended. Several times from a safe distance they had even dared to stone the civil guards when on the eve of trouble the three-cornered hats had been seen on the mountain roads. There were also frequent thefts of dynamite from the canteen depots—the apprentices, no doubt of it, must be hiding the sticks foreseeing what was going to happen. There was a big fight brewing!

To the audacity of the boys must be added the noisy anger of the women, who threatened to throw themselves in rows across the rails of the inclined planes and the railways to halt all transportation and to so make the strike general as far as the river. Then the foundries would have to close down and following that the harbor would become filled with idle ships waiting for cargoes that would never come.

“This is beginning to look ugly, Don Luis,” sighed

that greater admirer of England, whom the doctor with mock reverence addressed as 'Milord.' "This will be the death of the mines."

It was quite sufficient to see all the Galician workmen taking the trains back to their own country to understand how critical the situation was. These men were capable enough of rebelling for their own personal interest, but as soon as any collective protest turned up they were terrified and hurried off to their own country. They thought that strikes smelt of politics or of something dangerous with which poor people had best not meddle, and so being warned of the outbreak their companions were preparing, they slipped quietly away, intending to return when everything was settled to take advantage of any concessions the others might have won.

"But curse you all!" exclaimed the doctor after listening to 'Milord' and the other contractors, "is not what they ask just? What can they ask less than that their pay should be weekly, and that they should be able to buy their provisions wherever they choose."

His audience met this outbreak with ready excuses. It had always been the custom of the mines to treat the men in this way. It was the masters in the town, the wealthy mine owners, the foreign enterprises, who ought to set them the example; they themselves only stuck to ancient custom. Anyway, in the bottom of their hearts they did not feel any very great fear of the strike. However long the stoppage of work might be, they would not lose much, the mineral

would not vanish out of the quarries, they could wait until the men returned to hew it out—if not in one month, then in the next, and if it were still longer, they could still wait. They had enough to live on, while those who required their daily wage to keep from dying of hunger would give in sooner than they would.

The priest, Don Facundo, was indignant, not as a contractor, but as the shepherd of this rebellious flock. There was no religion, and faith was daily becoming more lukewarm, everything was going to the bad. The diabolical propaganda of the workmen in Bilbao had reached even the simple and long suffering people of the mountain.

"Numbers of the people die as calmly as dogs without sending for me," he exclaimed indignantly. "There are daily fewer burials; they go to the cemetery without remembering Don Facundo, escorted by hundreds of idiots who plume themselves on annoying the Church by attending what they are pleased to call civil burials. Gentlemen—civil burials in the Encartaciones! Who could ever have imagined we should see such a thing!"

The priest dwelt on the matter of the burials, as if of all the acts of hostility and indifference shown to the church this was the most shocking and the one that wounded his feelings as a priest most profoundly. But in spite of these labor troubles, Aresti's friends were very much engrossed in another matter which was the subject of animated conversation between them all.

A highly exciting contest was on in which all the notables of Gallarta were greatly interested. El Chiquito de Ciervana, the famous blaster, had lately received a challenge from some unknown person in Guipuzcoa to measure their strength and skill against one another. The meeting was to take place at Azpeitia, the centre of all Biscayan festivals. The rich men of that town, it was reported, had spoken with contempt of the mine contractors, believing that they would not be willing to put up money on their man or to back him up by accompanying him to Azpeitia.

The contractors of Gallarta shouted excitedly: "Not go! Of course we shall go! And a thorough good beating we shall give those pretentious Guipuzcoans! How did they ever dare challenge the Chiquito de Ciervana, who was one of the greatest glories of the Encartaciones! We are ready to bet thousands of duros for every pesta laid by those rustics of Guipuzcoa, who live on the wretched tillage of their fields."

Then and there they arranged the details of the wager, having regard to what had already been discussed by letter and even by special messenger with their distant adversaries. The contest would take place the following Sunday in the great square of Azpeitia; then they settled the number of holes the two blasters would have to drill in the stones; then the length of time the contest was to last. They forgot all about the mines and the threatened strike and could think of nothing but this duel. It was going to

be the most notable of all the many wagers these men had accepted in their anxiety to risk the money that fell into their hands so easily.

In this contest both class spirit and patriotism were aroused. Biscayans against Guipuzcoans, the people of the Encartaciones against those churls who dared to compare the rough blasters of their limestone quarries with the real artists of the iron mines.

As the day for the struggle approached, the contractors proudly displayed the bundles of bank notes with which they were going to overwhelm the "poor wretched" Guipuzcoans. El Chiquito was watched and cared for as if he were a valuable instrument. He no longer went to the mines but in the evenings consorted with the contractors who were all deeply interested in what he ate and drank.

"And how is the brave fellow?" they would say to him, feeling his arms that were like steel, and then they would pass their hands over his chest with almost feminine gentleness. El Chiquito, for his part, puffing out his chest and exhibiting proudly his knotted muscles, wore the contented smile of an idol as he allowed himself to be caressed.

He would win, as he always did, and as the Sunday approached which was to see his tremendous victory, they stuffed him with all sorts of delicacies and with as much *Cordon Rouge* as he could drink, as though this wine of the wealthy affirmed in advance his superiority over a rival who knew of nothing better than the sweet *sangardua* of his own mountains.

The contractors forced Aresti to accompany them

to Azpeitia, they could not thoroughly enjoy their victory, they said, unless their talented friend were there to see it also. So the doctor, who had become accustomed to the rough ways of his admirers and who did not wish to disappoint them, ended by joining the party. By dint of hearing them perpetually talking about the wager, he had at last become interested in it himself.

He was the only one who had any doubts as to the ultimate victory. The people of Azpeitia must surely know El Chiquito's ability, whereas the people of Gallarta knew not one thing about this mysterious adversary. When the inhabitants of Azpeitia had sent their challenge no doubt they had been perfectly sure of their own blaster's superiority.

It all looked to the doctor rather like a trap, and he counselled prudence. But all his friends laughed at him. Their Chiquito allow himself to be vanquished! And as a proof of their confidence they again flourished their bundles of bank notes. Amongst them all they were going to bet over fifty thousand duros, that is, if those of Azpeitia had the money to cover this with. They must be put to shame, and the money flourished in their faces. Then they would learn not to send challenges to the Bilbaons of the mines again.

The departure of the party that Sunday morning at dawn was almost a triumphant expedition. El Chiquito had left the day before with a few of his admirers so as to be well rested by the time of the trial. Those who started afterwards with the doctor were the more respectable inhabitants and they car-

ried with them the commissariat of the party, enormous baskets of provisions furnished by the best restaurants in the city, cases of champagne and boxes of cigars. As they looked over their hampers, they praised their own foresight—certainly it was only in Bilbao that people knew how to live well, what one found everywhere else was a poverty stricken country of savages where, even if they had well filled pocket books people would die of hunger or loathing at the unpalatable stuff set before them to eat.

When the doctor and his friends arrived the festival had already begun with the trials of the young oxen and a great crowd of villagers and country peasants were assembling, pouring into the Plaza through the adjoining streets. These grave countrymen in their wide blouses and greasy caps, leaning on their heavy, knotted sticks, looked with astonishment, as though they belonged to another race, at the rich contractors who were entering Azpeitia like an invading army, shouting loudly to one another and noisily demanding that a way be made for them by the Alguacil with his white wand, the sole person in authority in that immense crowd. These sober and simple people, accustomed to a scanty living from their unfertile fields in the mountains, were dumbfounded at the fine new clothes of the strangers, their showy hats, the huge gold chains hanging across their stomachs, and their hands covered with flashing rings—the hands nevertheless of former workmen, with coarse fingers and broken nails.

These rich people who had come for a holiday

carried a real fortune in their pocket books. Bearing themselves like great nobles of the land who condescended to join in these rustic festivities, their self-satisfied importance was evident at every step they took and in the contemptuous glances they cast at the people and their houses. Were some of those who had dared to challenge them among this wretched looking lot? . . . Poor deluded creatures!

Preceded by the Alguacil many of the miners found places in the balconies surrounding the square which were in great part already filled with women. Others took up positions in the front row close to the ropes which marked out a clear space in the middle of the Plaza, the lists where the contest was to be carried out; all the bets laid at the last moment would be made here amid the heaving, struggling crowd. Those behind stood on tip-toe to see better, leaning their hands on the shoulders of those in front, while now and again there would be a formidable rush from some side street that threatened to break the ropes. But then it was quite enough for the Alguacil to raise his white wand, or for a move to be made by a couple of Guipuzcoan mounted soldiers for the crowd to draw back and stand quiet.

Aresti, looking from a balcony, saw four masses of dark caps encircling the roped space into which two pairs of oxen were laboriously dragging huge stones much larger than well heads, enormous blocks which as they moved slowly along left deep furrows in the ground.

The joy of physical effort, the noisy rivalry of

these feats of strength worked the crowd up to a high pitch of excitement. The oxen tugging away as though their skulls would split beneath their yokes, were encouraged by the yells and prods of their drivers who were escorted by a noisy crowd of followers. Each time that a stone was moved forward a few feet, thanks to a tremendous pull, all the spectators set up a shout.

It was the pastime of a primitive race, of a people in its infancy who had not as yet entered the world of thought and who looked on physical strength as one of the most splendid attributes of man. The stern necessity of earning their bread by hard manual labor made them worship strength. The great cleaver of wood or the expert blaster was their hero. And to give the character of a festival to these displays of the strength of the muscles they used in their daily work, they brought into their games as fellow contenders their oxen, the meek and long suffering companions of their rural poverty.

As the doctor watched these rough and violent amusements of this primitive people, his thoughts turned to the Greek games beautified through the centuries by the charm of art. These simple and rough games in the open air involuntarily reminded him of the Olympic games.

"Yes, they are alike," he said to himself with a smile, "but it is the likeness existing between a barn door fowl and an eagle—they both have feathers."

Tired of the monotonous spectacle afforded by the oxen hauling the stones amid the applause and shouts

of the people who seemed not the least wearied by the long wait, the doctor amused himself by scanning the houses and the crowd.

This was his first visit to Azpeitia, the beautiful corner of Biscayne territory still so far from the railway, in which all the spirit and traditions of the race seemed to have taken refuge. This was the native place of St. Ignatius. At a few minutes' distance in the middle of the valley stood Loyola with its immense convent, the ugliness of whose palatial building excited the doctor's curiosity. The gloom of the Mother Residencia, of this edifice like a barrack, in which assembled all the commissioners of Jesuitism, collected from every corner of the earth when it became necessary to elect a new General for the order, seemed to cast its shadow over valley and mountain, moulding the villages to its own likeness.

Aresti saw many faces in the crowd that reminded him of the face of St. Ignatius. Those hard impassive features of icy firmness, which were considered the characteristics of that celebrated son of Azpeitia, seemed here to be a common racial type.

The hatred of the *Guiri*, the Spanish red pantalooned soldier summoned from the most distant provinces to expel the legitimate King, Don Carlos, had passed as an inheritance from generation to generation of these people. All the middle-aged men who crowded the Plaza must surely have worn the hood of the Guipuzcoan levies, and must have remembered the "King of the mountains," with his big

black beard and his white cap drawn down over his eyes. Eibar, with its arms factory and its liberal and irreligious workmen was close at hand, but it seemed as though it were at the other end of the world and that the mountains separating the two towns were impassable.

Every large door in Azpeitia was ornamented with a plaque bearing the Heart of Jesus. It was the only outward sign of religion, there were neither displays of faith nor of provocative enthusiasm. These were left for people whose devotion had waxed weak and where divine truth met with enemies. Throughout the whole valley the quiet and confident mediæval religious spirit seemed to survive, those quiet days when people troubled less about faith, when doubt and impiety had not yet raised their heads. To show a rebellious or doubting spirit in the country trodden by the blessed St. Ignatius was a thing so absurd, so inconceivable, that the supposition alone would have made those taciturn people laugh who were so proud of having given to the world a saint of such universal fame.

It being now past mid-day the trials of the young oxen had come to an end and the spectators had dispersed throughout the town. The most interesting part of the holiday, the contests of the "Aizkoralis," of the wood cleavers and the blasters, remained for the afternoon.

Aresti and his friends lunched at the town club, astonishing the natives with the popping of cham-

pagne corks and their display of pocketbooks full of bank notes that they tossed on the table with affected indifference. All the while crowds were still pouring in to see the great contest; coaches full of people; families and often several families crowded into carts each drawn by yokes of oxen guided by peasants walking at their heads with long sticks; groups of villagers in their shirt sleeves, their jackets and caps hanging at the end of the sticks they carried over their shoulders like guns.

Opposite a tavern where a crowd had gathered all were looking up at a balcony upon which an old man of great stature stood singing. When with almost priestly gravity he began a chant there was a hushed silence in the street. When he had ended his last verse in Biscayan on a sharp high note, the audience broke out into shouts of laughter contrasting strangely with the solemn bearing of the singer. Hardly had the laughter subsided when a sharper and more strident voice began from the balcony of another tavern, and a young man appeared who seemed to be answering the first singer who listened all attention as he prepared his rejoinder.

These were the *versolaris*, the wandering troubadours who appeared at every country festival, they were rough peasants who could not read but who possessed a natural talent and great facility of improvisation. Their verses had little other relation to poetry than that they rhymed, for there was a total absence of any poetic feeling in them, but the singers delighted the people with their satire and the gross-

ness of their jokes, and above all, with their quickness in repartee.

At these viva voce contests one *versolari* would begin his theme, certain that by the time he had finished another would be ready to take it up; then still others would follow and all the while the crowds would stand listening with delight as for hours argument went on and on.

About three o'clock a great part of the plaza was in the shade and the people rushed to it called by the whistling of pipes and the incessant rattling of drums. The *versolaris* stopped suddenly, for the best part of the show was now about to begin.

The Bilboan miners, flushed and perspiring after their feast, smoking like chimneys and reeking of champagne, occupied the best places and challenged everyone to bet. Now then! Who wished to bet! They need not be afraid of any sum large or small, there was over and above enough money for everyone. And they exhibited to the astonished gaze of the crowd, used only to the sober simple life of the mountains, their huge bundles of greasy bank notes, while a few of the more well to do of the peasants with almost apologetic smiles took up their bets in small amounts.

The afternoon's entertainment began with the contest of the *Aizkoralaris*. Some enormous tree trunks had been dragged into the plaza and were held securely in place by poles fixed into the ground. The pipes and drums sounded once more and a number of husky men stepped into the square carrying their

bright axes over their shoulders. Throwing their caps and hempen shoes aside they leapt at the trunks to begin their work.

A roar of applause greeted their first stroke. The miners clapped their hands as they did in the bull ring at Bilbao, for in the mines at Bilbao they did not use split timber and so they could admit some skill in these rustic woodmen and could afford to be good-natured to these axmen, humble folk who could in no way concern them.

The axes rose and fell, opening deep gashes along the lines marked on the trunks. The chips flew and whenever there was a stronger, more certain blow, a dull roar of approval ran around the plaza. The immense assemblage could guess the progress of the cuts without seeing them. Being all of them used to chopping wood in the mountains the different sounds of the axes spoke to them as plainly as the human voice. They knew, by the cracking of the wood, how much more each trunk required before it would be entirely split. Some of the *Aizkoralaris* were some minutes in the lead and their work was rapidly coming to an end, when suddenly a peculiar cracking which no one could misunderstand made every listener to the farthest limits of the plaza shiver with excitement. A trunk had just split. There was a deafening roar as the crowd broke out in its enthusiasm, and while all those behind the front rows stood on tip toe and craned their necks to see who was the winner.

The axemen leapt the ropes and were soon lost in

the crowd which was animatedly discussing the details of the contest. Once more the pipes and drums sounded as yokes of oxen dragged two enormous stones into the centre of the square. The most exciting moment of all had now arrived, the event which had brought so many people to Azpeitia. The great contest of the blasters was going to begin.

The crowds were silent as when the decisive moment of a bull fight has arrived. The musicians seemed to be playing in a deserted valley, so still was the plaza, when suddenly the immense mass as one man stepped forward and almost broke the ropes in their anxiety to see the two rival blasters as they entered the roped off arena.

The Guipuzcoan blaster was a chubby cheeked young fellow with a vacant expression in his face, blushing and rather timid at finding all eyes fixed on him. El Chiquito strutted into the arena with his drill over his shoulder, vainglorious as a torero in the arena as he ogled all the women sitting in the balconies.

"Olé! my lad!" shouted the miners. "Hurrah for El Chiquito! Now we shall see the best from the mines! There is plenty of money here to back him!"

Mingling their native cries with those they had picked up in the bull ring, they tossed their caps and their pocketbooks over the ropes into the arena, calling on the small boys who were running about to pick them up. El Chiquito smiled at the tumultuous ovation accorded him by his backers and was quick to notice other signs of his approaching triumph in

the taciturn and timid looks of his adversary and in the anxious silence of the peasants who had backed their own Guipuzcoan. The two men took off their caps and their hempen shoes and mounted bare-footed on to the stones on which were marked the holes they had to drill. Their contest was to last two hours, and the one who first drilled through his stone or who was the farthest advanced when the time was up was to be declared the victor.

The adversaries stood waiting with the bars raised above their heads. When the directors of the contest gave the signal a roar broke from the crowd as at the starting of a horse race. Then there was perfect silence and nothing was heard but the blows of the steel bars sounding with mechanical regularity upon the stone and the *haup! haup!* of the seconds, interrupted now and then by the gasping breathing of the workers.

Each of the blasters stood on his stone with his legs close together and his heels touching. Between their feet, which were fixed almost at right angles to each other, the heavy steel bar rose and fell regularly as it bit into the stone. The very slightest deviation from the straight line would wound them and could crush a foot with a bar of such weight driven with such power. But there was nothing really to fear for their arms worked with the precision of machines.

Each of the rivals was seconded by two friends, who assisted them in their efforts. They bent and raised themselves in time with their principals, sway-

ing in unison with their movements, serving as a kind of pendulum to regulate the rhythmic swing of the work. As they bent from the waist down, they signaled each blow of the rod with a short cry, "Haup! haup!" further to mark the time and maintain the pace.

It was almost laughable to watch those human puppets doubling themselves up and following with their own bodies the exertions of the combatants, wearying themselves out in their endeavor to transmit their own energy to the one they were seconding.

Several minutes passed—El Chiquito worked much quicker than his rival. His bar rose and fell with such rapidity that it could hardly be seen and his body appeared a hazy blur whose quick movements his seconds followed only with the greatest difficulty. He stopped for a second, changing his stance and then went right on again. The miners guessed that he had gone on to his second hole having finished his first one. And his rival was still in the same place!

"Olé! Chiquito!" they shouted, waving their big hands covered with rings—"Haup! haup!"

And in a discordant chorus they joined in with the two Biscayans who acted as assistants to their man.

The contest went on with the slow and tedious monotony of all exhibitions of strength. Aresti more interested in the result of the struggle than he had expected to be, watched the two men carefully.

It was a case of the impetuous assault of nervous, intelligent skill against calm tenacity and unruffled strength and muscle. El Chiquito at the first attack had left his rival behind but the latter went on steadily with his work taking no notice of anything around him, without hurry and without pause, as though he did not hear those who were shouting *haup! haup!* in his ears. It was he who regulated the movements of his seconds without allowing himself to be driven on by them as did his rival.

El Chiquito on the other hand stopped now and again, throwing around well satisfied glances, spitting on his hands, and then, seizing his bar, beginning his work afresh. His young antagonist had not as yet stopped once. Striking away doggedly at his stone with his head bent low and never raising his eyes he looked like a passive and resigned ox ploughing a never-ending furrow. An hour passed without any further change in the respective positions of the contestants. The Guipuzcoan continued drilling his holes, passing from one to another without ever raising his eyes. El Chiquito was still one hole to the good as at the beginning of the contest. The miners of Bilbao still maintained their insulting enthusiasm. They would still take any amount of bets! They offered to lay a *duro* against every *peseta* anyone cared to risk on that poor creature and they could not conceal their astonishment when they found that their offers were taken up by the country simpletons. What fools! And how they were going to lose their money!

The second hour was passing in silence, everyone seemed overcome with the monotony of the spectacle, the interminable wait stupefied their senses and checked all excitement. For this reason there were neither shouts of triumph nor exclamations of dismay when it began to be evident that the slow untiring blaster was gaining the advantage over El Chiquito who continued to make his rock tremble beneath the lightning strokes of his bar.

Aresti had foreseen this result for some time past. El Chiquito had repeatedly stopped for breath and to rest and he no longer threw around him those triumphant glances. He was plainly beginning to tire and showed distress. Many pairs of seconds had succeeded one another by his side all wearied out in following the rapid stroke he had set, but those who now accompanied him had to cry their haup! haup! haup! very much slower. In vain they endeavored to reanimate and encourage him, urging him on by their words as they would a tired and irresolute animal rearing under the lash but unable to do more.

The doctor was sorry for the two rivals as he looked at their pale sweating faces, their motionless and stiffened legs, the incessant swaying of their bodies backwards and forwards, their arms swollen with their exertion and he remembered others who had fallen in these brutal contests, struck dead as by a flash of lightning, their hearts having failed from over exertion.

The miners watched the rustic blaster and then they exchanged looks of astonishment—was that

animal never going to tire! They turned pale as though their digestion were playing them false, as if all the good things they had brought from Bilbao and washed down so copiously with champagne were rising in their stomachs. They began to fear the possibility of a defeat, they seemed to scent it in the silence that weighed on the plaza, in the very gravity of their enemies.

Some of the more energetic among them revolted at the possibility of such a calamity. Had they come from so far only to be laughed at by these beggars! . . . Once more there awoke in them the avarice of their old days of poverty which had so often spoiled their ostentatious displays with traits of meanness. They had wagered more than eighty thousand duros. Were they going to leave all that money in the muddy clutches of these peasants! Good Lord! How their miners would laugh at them!

The more excited among them leapt over the ropes and forcing El Chiquito's seconds back took their places on either side of him, throwing off their jackets and their caps and swaying backwards and forwards in spite of their corpulence, they roared the regulation *haup! haup!* with all the strength of their lungs as though their shouts could force their blaster's bar further into the rock.

El Chiquito regained fresh strength as he saw his protectors by his side and driven on by nervous energy was off again on a mad race of furious blows. But the weariness of his muscles reasserted itself, and

the bar rang feebly on the rock without making much progress.

"Get on! thief!" roared his wealthy seconds.
"Courage! you fool!"

Interspersing their incessant haup! haup! with every imaginable imprecation and insult, they urged on their blaster who would respond for a moment as if he had received a lash, only to fall back at once to his now weak and weary blows.

There were now only a few minutes left before the end of the wager. El Chiquito was in the middle of a hole and had yet another to pierce. His adversary had begun his last hole without hurry and without resting.

The miners longed for a catastrophe, an earthquake, or anything which would permit them to escape without meeting these rustics' eyes. The silence with which they accepted their victory annoyed the miners even more than the taunts of some strangers present who parodied the bombast of the Bilbaons by offering to lay a duro against a real in favor of the Guipuzcoan.

The contest ended without the explosion of excitement that Aresti had expected. The people merely crowded around the victor who gazed at them stupidly and allowed himself to be carried limp and exhausted to a tavern close by.

The doctor looked for his companions but saw none of them. They had all vanished as if by evaporation. He went in search of them and found several of them at the club door climbing hurriedly

into their coaches, their one anxiety being to get away as soon as possible, as though the ground were burning their feet. In the disorder of their flight they seemed to be hurrying off blindfolded and unable to take notice of him.

Inside the club he found El Chiquito lying on a bench wrapped in a blanket, pale and sweating, looking like a thoroughly frightened child, while in front of him stood several of the miners pouring out their last maledictions on him.

“What do you say about all this Doctor,” they enquired of Aresti in despair.

The doctor smiled, shrugging his shoulders. It was to be expected, they had over civilized their idol; they had made him acquainted with champagne, they had torn him from his primitive barbarism, and when he met with another of his own class just come from the quarry—very naturally he was defeated.

They all felt the necessity of venting their feelings before they left, each one would have taken the greatest pleasure in thumping that limp bundle that lay wrapped up sobbing on the bench and so they berated him for all the wine and dainties with which they had stuffed him at all hours.

“Do you hear, you thief? Do you hear what the doctor says? You are too fond of champagne. You must have been drunk and therefore you have made us lose, you pig. Eighty thousand duros! Do you understand, you ——? We have lost over eighty thousand duros by your fault. . . . You had better

not go back there; we will beat you to death if you ever show yourself in the mines."

Each one left after he had given his rage full rein and in the mad rush of their flight none took notice of his companions. In the selfishness of their discomfiture all friendship was blotted out and they even forgot to ask the doctor to go with them.

The unhappy blaster as soon as he found himself alone with Aresti burst into tears.

"Don Luis! . . . Don Luis!" . . .

His voice had the same tone of childish entreaty that Aresti had so often heard from the miners when they saw the doctor approaching their beds in the hospital.

He had lost everything at one fell swoop. Good-bye to feasting and indulgence and friendship with the rich—everything that had caused him to be looked on with such envy by his former companions when he had deigned to go up to the quarries accompanied by the contractors! He had been a hero, an idol, and now he suddenly found himself once more a workman—less even, for he would never again get any employment in the mines. If he returned there they would be capable of murdering him. He felt overwhelmed with remorse at the enormous sums he had caused his masters to lose.

"I will go away," he groaned. "How they will all laugh at me! . . . I will embark on the first ship that sails for America."

A group of country people interrupted him.

They had come to carry off El Chiquito with them, they wanted to treat him with the generosity born of their victory. He must not be downhearted, they had all seen he was a fine blaster, he would be sure to win another time. Besides, the affair had been in the hands of those very stuck up gentlemen, he was nothing more than their tool. His adversary was waiting for him at the tavern to have a drink with him like a good comrade.

So they carried him off as a tribute to his fame, they gathered about him respectfully and treated him with the same honors they would have shown to a standard won from the enemy.

When Aresti returned to the Plaza night was falling, the people had scattered through the streets and were assembling at the tavern doors.

The *versolaris*, very drunk by this time, were giving themselves free rein in their improvisation, singing of the triumph of the natives, with sundry free allusions to the rich miners which delighted their audience.

In the plaza the pipes and drums were playing dance music. All the young people had assembled to celebrate their victory with an *aurresku*, the great Biscayan dance which resembles some primitive rite. An agile dancer who was the leader of the *aurresku*, began it with the solemn step of invitation. He threw his cap on the ground and after asking permission of the Alcalde who presided over the ceremony, he went with a series of very minute steps and bounds of extraordinary agility to invite into

the circle the woman whom he wished to elect Queen of the dance. There had never been known a case of any Biscayan woman, however high her rank, refusing this honor. Aresti had seen ladies of the oldest nobility dancing the *aurresku* with peasants and sailors. It was a ceremonious dance sparing in contact, the men and women in the different figures scarcely touched the tips of each other's fingers. The woman did little more than complete the picture, while the man to the tune the pipes incessantly sounded, seemed to describe with his feet and his prodigious bounds and remarkable displays of gymnastic agility the mimic warfare of primitive peoples. It was all very like the wild tribal dances that Aresti remembered to have seen at the *Jardin d'Acclimatation* in Paris.

All the spectators were praising the activity of the Azpeitian dancer but an old villager held forth to his friends in Biscayan; he did not care much for this particular *aurresku*, he had seen it danced by a King in the good times of the war, and he told them of an *aurresku* danced by Don Carlos in the Convent of Nuns in Durango without sin to anyone, for the Biscayan dance was the most modest in the world.

As night fell Aresti sought the hospitality of a little inn, where many lodged who came to visit the sanctuary of Loyola. He also was anxious to visit the convent the following morning, as an interesting sight which would reward him for his journey. Spending the night in a little whitewashed room with

a crucifix at the head of the bed, and with walls covered with prints of saints, the inn seemed to him like an anteroom to the convent.

At six o'clock next morning the doctor left the village following the very straight road running through the valley of Loyola. A gentle rain had fallen during the night refreshing the fields and laying the dust, the high mountains were still capped with mist through the rents of which the white farm houses and oak woods could be seen here and there, while on the lower green slopes the flocks of long fleeced sheep were quietly grazing.

By seven o'clock he had arrived at the monastery, whose monumental, ostentatious aspect, and solemn ugliness contrasted sharply with the solitude and silence of the fields. On either side of the approach leading up to it were two walks covered over with climbing plants, leafy tunnels of fresh greenery.

The doctor looked with a certain admiration at the enormous and overpowering building. It could not be denied that it had some character to it. The Jesuits assuredly had an art of their own, that of ostentation and want of good taste; there was no architectural work belonging to them anywhere that was not marked with their seal, as if they wished it to be recognized from afar.

The façade of the church which occupied the centre of the monastery was entirely of stone. Columns supported the front of the building which was ornamented with a gigantic coat of arms, the balustrade surmounting it was crowned with enor-

mous pinnacles carrying globes. Behind rose the grey cupola of the church also surmounted by pinnacles and balls, the whole effect being rather that of a Chinese pagoda.

On either side of the church extended the two wings of the monastery, built of red brick with a triple row of windows, two enormous blocks without any religious symbol. The monastery deprived of its cupola might have been an eighteenth century barrack.

On one side of the building ran the river Urola spanned by an iron bridge, while on the other rose a large house with a portico. This was the hotel for the rich people who came to perform their spiritual exercises and who could not spend the night inside the monastery.

The church inside was circular and very light, incrustated with bright colored marbles. Oh! the smiling and pretty church! The altars were as attractive as dishes laid out for a banquet, there were caramel colored marbles, others of honey or fresh strawberry color, and again others were green like candied fruit, or soft white like the whipped cream of a meringue. One felt inclined to bite the beautiful stones polished like mirrors which were so soft-seeming to the eyes. The images were smiling, pretty, and highly varnished, looking as if they had just come out of a confectioner's shop. The segments of the cupola were filled by large escutcheons of all the nations where the Ignacian order had obtained a footing, the "Provinces of the Com-

pany" as it called them in its dreams of universal dominion.

Leaving the church the doctor walked through a wide corridor leading to an open court-yard at the further end of which was the porter's lodge. Ringing a bell he waited in the yard, one side of which was occupied by the ancient family house of St. Ignatius, for as the monastery had become larger it had absorbed the small ancient castle of Loyola, enclosing it within the new buildings.

The little house which seemed all the smaller from being swallowed up by the monastery was the most beautiful part in all that pile of pretentious masonry. It was a small castle of two elevations, showing the transition period of the fifteenth century, the diversity of superposed tastes in that Catholic Spain which still had Moors within its boundaries. The lower story was the larger and stronger, built of large blocks of worked stone, with very few windows and those as small and deep as loopholes, a wall fit to shelter the inmates from surprise and siege. The upper part was much lighter, built of red bricks, its two stories marked by a band of Moorish tracery and at each of the four corners stood a slender tower, a little minaret, which gave this part of the building the appearance of a crown. Below in the windows formed for the arquebus one read the gloomy alarm, the perpetual fear of the bands which ravaged the Biscayan country; while above there was the elegance copied from the Arabs, the lightness of building belonging to an artistic people, with its pretty Moor-

ish horseshoe windows where one could sit and dream in the evening twilight after reading a book of chivalry.

At last the door opened and a brother came out.

"May you have holy and happy days," he said softly bowing his head, at the same time raising his eyes to take in the visitor with a rapid glance.

He was a young man remarkable in appearance because of his immense ears which stood out like open fans, and the extreme length and thinness of his neck which made his head appear large out of all proportion. He was the brother appointed to show the Saint's house, he explained. From below his cassock appeared his cloth shoes which enabled him to walk without the slightest noise, a sort of spying foot gear which allowed him in common with all the other monastic servants to glide silently through the cloisters without disturbing the Father's meditations.

As they crossed the court yard he spoke to Aresti of the soles of his shoes which were also of cloth and which got wet in the rain puddles—It was one penance the more—It was all God's will! . . . Then they entered the little castle, the interior of which had been turned into a chapel; here the ladies carried out their spiritual exercises as they were not allowed to enter the monastery.

Mounting the staircase which was adorned with images at every turn, they entered the ancient room now a chapel. The first thing that impressed the doctor was the extreme lowness of the ceiling which

could be touched with the hands and seemed as though it would crush him with the weight of its heavy gilded panels of garlands of flowers.

The brother pointed out with pride the pictures and hangings that adorned the walls, they were all presents from princesses and queens, bearing witness to the gratitude of the noble consciences submitted to the Company. At the further end was the altar, in its lower part, behind glass, the devotees could admire in the recess St. Ignatius in wax lying on a mattress reading a book, dressed in trunk hose and a short hooded cloak turned back with velvet, like that of a gallant in a play; hidden electric lights illuminated this exhibition worthy of a fair.

In spite of the many years he had been showing it to strangers, the brother could not hide his admiration as he explained the significance of this part of the altar. That figure represented Don Iñigo de Loyola when he had as yet no thought of becoming a Saint nor of founding the Order. It represented him at the starting point of his conversion, reading a history of the Virgin during his convalescence from a wound in the leg received from an arquebus at the siege of Pamplona.

“God called him to His Grace when he was convalescent and he forgot all else, although he was a very gallant and worldly knight. Our Holy Father St. Ignatius was a soldier you know—a soldier.”

The lay brother's voice as he uttered this last word expressed the deepest admiration and respect. This poor man so puny and narrow-minded worshipped

the strength, the pride, the showy uniforms of the man of action.

While the brother was speaking Aresti looked at the figure and thought of the stern man, the Biscayan of such a strange and complicated character, who had filled the whole world with his name, each period of whose life had been in violent contradiction to every other. First the dashing and elegant soldier endeavoring in every way to polish off his native roughness and even suffering the removal of a protruding bone in his leg that he might look more comely. Then when he became convinced that his worldly triumphs were ended, the fanaticism of his race had surged up within him with all the strength inherent in his all-powerful will. Finally the complete revulsion, the madness of holiness, humble and proud at the same time. . . . Although he had dedicated himself to God, it had of necessity to be for some present and worldly object. It was excellent to be a Saint, still it must be to some tangible and visible purpose. The instinct of the fighting man arose in him once more when he saw that the Church, threatened by the Lutheran reformation, required a strong auxiliary and he carried into religion the discipline of the camp, founding not an Order but a Company, organizing the black robed army which he offered to the Pope, forming his soldiers in the mould of his own iron will, without family affections, without thoughts of their own, with the rigidity of automatons, with that insensibility to feeling which made them invincible. The ascetic

became a mighty leader and in this third stage of his life, the vagabond who had once allowed himself to be stoned by children, gave himself the airs of a Vice-Pope, had himself called General by his followers, lived in Rome among Princes, mixed in all the complicated intrigues of Europe and died satisfied with his power and that he had saved Catholicism by preserving to it the Latin peoples.

Aresti admired Iñigo de Loyola as a finished specimen of his race, incapable of holding for long any illusions on immaterial things, extracting instinctively both power and wealth from that saintly asceticism which so many others had borne with their bodies devoured by vermin and tormented by penance and possessed of no other fortune but the cord bound round their loins.

He had been a practical business expert arising just in time to save the Roman firm from bankruptcy, putting order into its affairs and giving them a new direction by founding his Company, that disciplined body of commissioners of Catholicism who travelled over the whole earth, trading on all human passions and weaknesses for the greater glory of God.

The brother roused the doctor from his reverie by pointing to the upper part of the altar, where in a golden reliquary was preserved the heart of the Saint; it was all they possessed of the founder, his body, as all the world knew, was deposited in Rome in the Jesu.

He moved toward a little door close by the altar,

bowing to allow the visitor to pass first into a small room whose only adornment was an altar back.

“Our Holy founder lay ill here,” said he sweetly, “and here his conversion was accomplished. He had requested his family to bring him a book on chivalry to amuse him, but God had cast His eyes on him, and it came about that no book of the kind could be found though there were many in the Castle. So he read instead a History of the Virgin and immediately feeling himself touched by Grace he determined to devote himself to the Holy Life and to renounce the world.”

The lay brother pointed to a crack in the wall, “Look at this, Sir; it is even better seen from outside as it reaches down to the ground, splitting the stones. This crack was made by the devil. At the very moment when the Saint determined to devote himself to God, the earth shook and the whole house trembled. This crack remains as a record of the event. It was the devil who acknowledged in this way the Saint’s decision.”

“It was probably from rage,” said Aresti with imperturbable gravity.

“From rage and fear,” replied the brother modestly. “Probably the evil one trembled, guessing that the Saint would found the Order.”

They passed on to another room at the opposite end of the chapel. Each time the lay brother came opposite the altar he fell on his knees, to the doctor’s great amusement, for as he recited his short prayer his body remained erect with his hands crossed on

his breast, while his long neck stretched itself out into space like a giraffe's.

"In this room," he continued, "our holy founder was born. Here also Brother Garrido received his portentous revelation—you will have heard about that?" . . .

But seeing that the visitor remained unmoved, he said impatiently,

"But surely you must know who Brother Garrido was?"

"Oh! certainly," said Aresti, who heard the name for the first time.

"I expected," said the brother, "that a gentleman like you would know about Brother Garrido. The Fathers in Rome think of canonizing him when the proper time has elapsed."

He spoke with enthusiasm of this brother, as though he were a world-wide celebrity. In this same room the Brother Garrido being in ecstasy, the Virgin had appeared to him, announcing to him twenty-two months before its occurrence the assault on the convents and the beheading of the friars, in the first years of the reign of Isabella II.

"So that the Fathers of the Company being warned in time, were not victims of the risings?"

"They murdered some of them in the Imperial College in Madrid," replied the lay brother, "but the Brother Garrido was so modest he had kept silence about the revelation, not making it known publicly till after the news of the assassinations had arrived—Brother Garrido was very humble, and

therefore he will some day be a saint the more in our Order."

They had finished the inspection of St. Ignatius' house and the ladies would soon be arriving for their exercises in the chapel, but the brother felt loth to part from this devout and admiring visitor who took in all he told him without blinking.

"Would you like to see the monastery?" he enquired. "Perhaps you would like to go up into the library? There is very little to see there, everything in it is so old."

"The old is the best," said Aresti gravely.

"You are quite right. Oh! if only all the world thought as soundly as you do! Not like people now-a-days who only read novels and wicked books against religion."

The library was on the upper floor, a large room through whose windows the sun poured in, affording a view of the green mountains which were now free from clouds. Many of the large book cases contained different editions of Greek and Latin classics bound in parchment, others contained theological works, while all the rest were filled with books written in favor of or in defence of the Company. Aresti with curiosity read the names of those works completely unknown to him. The library smelt like a tomb, everything in it was very old.

As they descended into the cloisters the doctor felt half afraid of meeting some Padre who might have known him in Bilbao, but at this hour they were all in their cells and only a few lay brothers were

passing hurriedly along in their cassocks and noiseless shoes.

Led by the lay brother Aresti visited one of the cells set apart for the lodging of the seculars during the ten days that their religious exercises lasted.

"It is very poor," said the brother showing it, "but very decent and clean. All classes of persons come here, bankers, generals, even ministers of the Crown. They live here comfortably enough and are so happy in this poverty while they care for their souls."

The doctor looked around the room. It was high and of fair proportions; close by the window stood a table and two straw chairs; the bed was concealed behind a low partition with a red curtain over the door. Having taken in the little there was to see, they descended into the cloisters, the walls of which were hung with old portraits of no artistic value yet possessing some historical interest, as they were of the most celebrated Padres of the Company, men who often at the peril of their lives had spread themselves over the world in the first expansion of the then recently founded Order, concealing their methods and their ends and conforming everywhere to the tastes and habits of the countries in which they had established themselves.

Aresti had now seen all the monastery, the refectory with its reading pulpit, the chapel where the men made their spiritual exercises by the door of which the Padres had placed a tray so that the young men might drop into it a small paper con-

taining their petitions to the Virgin; the kitchen, and the parlor hung with looking glasses, in which both priests and seculars were allowed to smoke one cigarette, for in all the rest of the monastery, though smoking was not actually forbidden, it was coolly looked upon by the superiors.

"Nothing remains now but the garden; would you like to see that?" enquired the lay brother, anxious still to prolong his interview with this visitor who listened to him so attentively.

The garden was surrounded by a high stone wall, beyond the further end of which lay a small farm with cows and pigs which the lay brother pointed out with tender interest. Only the birds fluttering among the fruit trees disturbed the monastic silence of the enclosure.

A layman, the only other person in the garden, was walking with a book in his hand along the same path that they were following. Aresti saw his back and quickened his pace, a sudden suspicion having struck him which he wished to satisfy.

"That is a very rich gentleman—very rich indeed," said the brother seeing Aresti's curiosity. "He has been here six days making his religious exercises. I think he comes from Bilbao, and his name. . . ."

But before the lay brother could utter the name, the layman turned around at the sound of their footsteps.

"Pepé . . ." cried the doctor.

His surprise at recognizing Sanchez Morueta was

so overwhelming that he could not utter another word.

"Luis! . . . my cousin! . . ." exclaimed Morueta in astonishment.

But after the first impression of pleasure had passed, Sanchez Morueta showed annoyance, like one who sleeps and finds himself suddenly awakened.

The brother, with a courteous wish not to be in the way, went on a few steps and stopped at some distance from the two men. He had a profound feeling of respect for the devotee whom all the Padres treated with such great deference, allowing him to smoke in his cell and to walk in the garden at all hours, along with other no less important privileges granted only to people of the highest influence. The doctor at once acquired an immense importance in his eyes because of the affectionate greeting of this personage.

The two men stood looking at one another for a long time in silence.

"You here?" . . .

And Aresti threw into this exclamation all the intensity of his surprise.

Sanchez Morueta smiled as his cousin had never seen him smile before. It was an expression at once of resigned modesty and of surrender of will.

He spoke simply as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened since they had last met. Cristina and his daughter had accompanied him to the exercises. Many of the best families of Bilbao were there for the same purpose, the ladies at the hotel, the men in

cells in the monastery. He had been six days and would remain four more.

“And are you well? Do you like this life?”

“Yes,” he replied, “I feel perfectly well, you have only to look at me.”

Sanchez Morueta seemed to be quite recovered. There was no resemblance now to the invalid whom Aresti had seen on his last visit to Las Arenas. His eyes were calm, seeming to mirror a serenity of mind and the ruddy color of the early days of his struggling youth had returned to reanimate his face.

The doctor listened with amazement as he enumerated the occupations of his life in this establishment, all arranged in accordance with a schedule prepared by the director of his exercises. He rose at half-past five in the morning; at six he went down into the Chapel, reading for half an hour the book that always accompanied him, afterwards he meditated for an hour, heard mass and breakfasted, then he rested until ten or walked in this quiet garden that the Fathers placed at his disposal. He meditated again until twelve in his cell, when he received a visit from his director; then he recited the *Via Crucis* in the cloisters until dinner at one and resting again until four; he then went down into the chapel to hear the discourses with his companions in these exercises. At seven o'clock was the Station of the Holy Sacrament, afterwards the Rosary, the sorrows and joys of St. Joseph, and the examination of his conscience of all he had done during the day. At nine he supped, and at ten he went to bed.

He who in the outside world could give his orders to thousands of human beings, now enjoyed the strange sweetness of being ruled, of feeling his own will dominated by a will superior to his own. The poor cell and the plain dinner in the refectory seemed to him a strange luxury after so many years of ostentatious and refined comfort in his palace at Las Arenas. The first days had been rather hard for him but now he enjoyed the peace of nonentity, of finding himself guided, of surrender, of becoming lowly and humble, meditating on death at all hours to convince himself of human insignificance.

The world to which he would have to return seemed so very, very far away; surely that Bilbao of which he was King must be in another planet with all its struggles for wealth, its feverish selfishness, of which nothing, absolutely nothing, reached this quiet corner.

"I am well, Luis, better than ever, and the gratification at the change in me which I see in my wife and daughter fills me with joy. I feel certain that when we leave this we shall love each other more, and that we shall be a truly Christian family, as it is said by . . ."

He stopped, as though ashamed of uttering before Luis the name of which he thought. But he repented at his hesitation as of a sin, and added with energy, anxious to impose his convictions upon the doctor,

"The Jesuits are not wicked as I had foolishly thought. You ought to correct your error, Luis.

They are most excellent people, real saints—Ah! If you only knew them.”

Then after speaking of Urquiola who had accompanied them to these exercises but who had been obliged to leave the day before, having been summoned to Bilbao by Padre Pauli, he returned to the quietness of this cloistered life, without worries or ambition—such a contrast to his life in Bilbao.

“I believe, Luis, if I had not wife or child I should remain here for ever. This is the true life. You know what the life outside is, nothing but trouble and evil.”

Aresti listened in silence, observing him steadily, without blinking, as if he were in the presence of a sick man, of an “interesting case.”

“What have you got there?” he asked of a sudden, seizing the book his cousin held tightly in his hand.

A glance was sufficient to make him recognize the volume bound in pasteboard, in the large and common type of devotional books. It was a copy of “The Spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius,” expounded by Father Claret the celebrated Bishop of Trajanapolis who had acquired so much influence during the latter years of Isabella II.

Aresti knew the book. He had found it often enough on his table while he was living with his wife. He remembered its warlike, pious style. Speaking of the two banners. “The one is of Christ our Lord, the great Captain; the other of Lucifer, the mortal enemy of our human nature.” St. Ignatius and

Father Claret rose to the most moving eloquence as they described hell. The fire of that place of malediction was so intense "that a single spark would reduce a millstone to powder; if it fell on a globe of bronze it would melt it at once like wax; if it fell on a frozen lake it would make it boil instantly." The condemned "felt this fire in their brains, their teeth, tongue, throat, liver, lungs, entrails, stomach, heart, veins, nerves, bones, in the marrow of these, in their blood, and even in the powers of the soul," and after this horrifying enumeration, St. Ignatius enquired of the sinner's soul, with whom he wished to go, whether with God or with the Devil?" Oh! wretched Luzbel! ridiculous simpleton that thou art! to offer with stupid cunning to give in exchange of the short felicities of life an eternity of such horrible fire." The answer could not be doubtful. All the souls would go with God after these holy admonitions.

"But you, can you believe in all these things about hell and glory, that are so vulgarly, so coarsely depicted in this book?"

Aresti's steady gaze worried his cousin.

"As to believing . . . well I cannot affirm it roundly. Doubts assail me, but I am silent so as not to annoy my director. But all this gives me a certain comfort. Its absurdity amuses me and pleases me, it takes me back to the peacefulness of childhood. I often think they are still rocking me and murmuring stories in my ear."

As the doctor smiled Sanchez Morueta hastened to

add: "But I am much happier, far more tranquil than before. Besides, there is something in these meditations that impresses me deeply, something that neither you nor anyone else can deny, that is,—death. We are getting old, Luis, it will come and neither wealth nor prayers will soften it. Since I have had nothing more to wish for and nothing more to master, I have dreaded it greatly."

The terror of the unknown, of inevitable dissolution, of eternal darkness, was evident in the expression of despair written upon his face.

Aresti remembered the page on death in St. Ignatius' book, a page of brutal realism, which made men tremble and women weep with terror. "See what now happens to that body: formerly so beautiful, so idolized, now that it is dead, now that it is buried, now that it has fallen . . . Now the big flies come, and the beetles, toads, and grubs, and revel and delight in the bad smell that arises and the putrefaction which begins to spread. Also the rats approach, they gnaw the clothes or shroud; they entangle themselves in the hair, they enter the mouth and begin to eat the tongue: then they come out, and search all the body between the flesh and the clothes. In the meanwhile the putrefaction increases and quantities of worms breed, devouring the flesh of the stomach, of the face and of all the body. Now the feast is ended, and the worms die of hunger, leaving nothing but black and fleshless bones which in time turn into lime and at last into dust. Remember man, that you are dust, and to dust you must

return, as far as regards the body. For you are a man of smoke or earth."

"Read this! Read this! . . ." cried his cousin, opening the book at this very same page which he had marked as though it obsessed him.

"Death! . . ." he murmured at length. "One talks of it very often, without thinking of what it really is, without stopping to examine it closely. How horrible! to struggle all one's life to give pleasure to the flesh, only to prepare a feast for worms. . . ."

After a pause he added in a low voice, "There must be something after death, I do not know for certain if it will be what they say here, or what they say in another place. But what do I lose by believing, blindfold? For the moment, I gain the peace of my household. And it is well, in case there is anything beyond, to go prepared for everything without fear of having been deceived."

Aresti smiled with pity at this commercial attitude which weighed the chances of a future life with the same selfishness as it would an ordinary business transaction.

For a certainty now they would have to say good-bye for ever, for it was all too evident that his cousin was thoroughly well caught both by his selfishness and his fear of death, the two prime weaknesses of prosperous people.

"You ought to come and stay here, Luis. Do come some time. The Fathers are such kindly people. What could you lose by it? Even if you did

not believe everything, you—might keep silence and be happy. What good do you get out of so much study? Are you sure that all you believe is true? And what if after death you should come face to face with your great mistake and you should find that, after all, there is something? . . .”

The doctor shook his hand in a cold farewell, feeling sure that it was the last, that in future they would look on each other as though they were strangers to each other.

Aresti left the garden preceded by the lay brother who, having caught snatches of their talk, was now silent and anxious to get him out of the monastery.

Before leaving the garden Aresti turned once more to look at his cousin. The great master of industry who had been so dear to him stood there motionless, following him with his eyes, and seemed to say again:

“Death Luis! . . . think of death!”

CHAPTER X

AT ten o'clock of a Sunday morning in the month of September Aresti arrived in Bilbao.

The Portugalete train was filled with workmen coming from the mines and from the banks of the river. They all seemed in a great hurry to get to the Bull Ring, for a great meeting of protest was to be held there against the masters and owners, who had refused to agree to the miners' demands. A strike had been threatening for nearly two months past and this popular gathering was to be the worker's ultimatum.

The earlier morning trains had brought a still heavier human freight to Bilbao, and the townspeople were beginning to look on these arrivals with alarm.

But not all were going to the meeting. A great many peasants with their heavy sticks also got out of the trains, escorting the priests of their several parish churches, all come to take part in the great pilgrimage which was to go up to the Sanctuary of Begoña in the afternoon.

The labor meeting and the festival organized by the Jesuits and the Biscayan ladies unfortunately had been fixed for the same day. A fighting, nervous atmosphere seemed to pervade the city; men's words

were curt and few, their bearing insolent and provocative.

Aresti had sized up the state of affairs during the journey. The car was crowded partly with workmen and partly with peasants going to the pilgrimage, each group eyed the other with open hostility, the peasants clutching their sticks nervously as they listened to the miners' jests at their expense.

The peasants, however, had kept silent because on this railway line they had been in the minority. If it had only been on the line from Durango by which the flocks of the faithful would come down for the afternoon's festival, in serried masses escorted by their priests with banners at their head! . . .

As he got out of the train Aresti heard someone calling him.

It was Captain Iriondo in the old clothes he wore on his shooting expeditions, his gun was hanging from his shoulder and the dog close at heel was sniffing his hands.

"You have come in search of the row, eh?" he said to the doctor. "You come because you delight in these things and I am going away so as not to see them."

He was leaving to shoot somewhere or other, all he wanted was to escape from Bilbao so as not to see what would surely happen.

"The air smells of powder, my friend, and it will rain blows. As I came along to the station, this Bilbao so new and so beautiful reminded me of the siege. The socialists, the republicans, and all who

think things are going all wrong, are assembling in the Bull Ring with banners and *vivas*. The others are summoned to assemble in the churches in the afternoon, and are showing each other their revolvers in the corners of the Sacristies. Padre Pauli has been preaching for some time past that one must die for the faith, and that imposter Urquiola goes about haranguing all the young men from Deusto, urging them to kill in the name of God. The poor town is like an egg between two stones, and I am off, Luis, I am off, and I am astonished at your pleasure in seeing these things."

Aresti listened with interest. Yes, he certainly had journeyed here attracted by the possibility of a collision and he was anxious to see how the workmen from the mines and the people from the factories would acquit themselves for the first time against Jesuitism. It was quite time that the people of Bilbao should rise against that enemy which was insinuating itself into their very vitals, even though twice previously it had been defeated in its improvised trenches, when Jesuitism was concealing itself behind the standards of Don Carlos.

"You are quite right as to that, Luis," said the captain warmly. "If I go, it is because I cannot endure what I see in these streets. When I got up I did not think of going into the country, but suddenly I seized my gun to get away. What a shame! What was the use of our eating bean bread and horse flesh and attacking those trenches, if those whom we routed then have now slipped into our houses and

made themselves masters there? See how it is now in Bilbao, my lad! You cannot take a single step without running against a priest. Those who years ago bombarded our town and who now would willingly see it in flames, strut about it like lords. They have come down in crowds to see the Virgin, with their revolvers in their pockets, looking with insolence at every one of us as though they were longing that the time might come quickly for them to kill a few of us liberal dogs."

The captain was in a hurry to get away for if he remained in the city he knew that more than likely he would get mixed up in the struggle. He was afraid of his own enthusiasm; he might very possibly without in the least intending it come to blows with that sneaking Carlism that irritated him to the point of desperation.

"I am nothing but an employe, Luis, a dependent of Sanchez Morueta, and just imagine what Doña Cristina would do if she saw me taking part in the row, and what would Pepé himself say, now he is so terribly changed?"

Mention of Sanchez Morueta and his family sent the doctor and the old sailor off on the startling transformation of their old friend of whom Aresti had heard very little since his return from Loyola.

"He is a different man," said Iriondo sadly, "the house is no longer the same."

With the prudence of a faithful subordinate who fears to be indiscreet he was unwilling to give details but his frankness broke out in spite of himself.

"It is a shame! You belong to the family and ought to know everything. Besides you are my friend and are attached to Pepé. Ah! my friend, that is no longer a house, it is a convent, and some day he who was such a grand man will end by bringing Padre Pauli to the office to give directions to the employés. The Father does not leave him alone for an instant."

He described crossly enough his employer's new life. "They all domineer over him," he explained. "They all rule him, his wife, his daughter, even that insupportable Urquiola, who now says to him with the greatest insolence, 'Uncle, do not do that,' or 'Uncle, do this.' For the time being Sanchez Morueta is only 'Uncle,' but the year will not be out before that hypocrite calls him 'Father.' He is to have Pepita and they all seem satisfied with the marriage, the girl herself, her mother and Padre Pauli; her father is silent but it seems that as the others are content, there is no need to consult his wishes. Urquiola already goes into the office and gives his orders sharply to the clerks. Even with me, if you please, he has tried it on; with Pepé's old friend to whom Pepé himself always has spoken with such brotherly consideration! It is a shame! in one's old age after a life of faithful and independent work, to become the servant of that puppy from Deusto! I would sooner resign, deserting Pepé, who as you know, is no longer the Pepé I have known these many years.

"How they have changed him for us, Luis!" con-

tinued the Captain. "Could you believe it that one day in the office after his return from Loyola, he told me that he had made a general confession, given an account of all the sins of his life, and he assured me that after having done so he felt in better health, as if the world were quite different! I have never seen a fall like this. His wife keeps him completely under her thumb and in this she is helped by that reprobate Urquiola. Have you heard of that rascal's last exploit? . . . You have not heard it? All Bilbao has been ringing with it, but these things do not get as far as the mines."

And he told Aresti a story worthy of a sensational newspaper. Urquiola by an outbreak of violence had caused a premature confinement to the unhappy woman who lived in the suburbs and was his mistress. She had long borne in silence a slavery of unhappiness and blows, fascinated probably by his physical appearance and by his insolent claims to noble parentage. The protégé of Padre Pauli was aghast at the idea of a child being born to him just at the time when his marriage to the largest fortune in Bilbao had been arranged. The unhappy woman's illness and the indignation of the neighborhood had caused the intervention of the magistrates. But it only came to a quickly hushed up scandal, nothing more! In that town everything bowed before the influence of the Padres and the respect paid to the wealthy. "And there is Pepé knowing nothing—or if he does know anything, it is as though he knew it not. It is quite enough for Doña Cristina

to say it is all lies for him to believe her ; or for Padre Pauli to tell him that Urquiola will be a great man, for him to listen unmoved to his follies or his insolent bragging as a mob leader. Ah! Luis, what rapid and absolute control these people have acquired!"

Iriondo described the secret influence which now extended to everything under the rule of Sanchez Morueta, to the factories, the foundries and even to the ships. Without any regard to his position as navigating director to the firm they had made him dismiss many old sailors who had been for years in Morueta's service, and accept in their place young men who as soon as they took possession of their bunks nailed up a print of the Heart of Jesus. In face of his master's new manner and from fear of those hidden behind him who now regulated all his actions, he had not ventured to make any objection.

The previous week they had ordered him to dismiss all workmen who while loading or unloading the ships swore or showed themselves interested in the propagation of impious doctrines. Good Lord! that he at his age should be turned into a brother of the Christian Doctrine, and be obliged by those gentlemen to teach the Catechism and chaste language to the stevedores of the Nervion! . . .

"Then again the blast furnaces!" the captain went on. "There will be a big strike there some day, followed by the throat cutting of all those devotees who have invaded the offices as a conquered land. Since that fine young fellow Sanabre left, the furnaces have been a hell. Some of these days Pepé will

have a tremendous outbreak on his hands, and the strikers will have the right on their side. Work and honesty are the last things that concern those who now direct the house. The men who are not church-goers are turned out into the street, and the workshops are getting filled up by degrees with hypocrites who work as they choose, but who are esteemed and kept on the pay roll because they go to mass and enroll their names in the different Catholic workmen's societies."

The moral collapse of Sanchez Morueta and the way he allowed others to dominate his will particularly irritated the old sailor.

"Your cousin does not dare to move, Luis. His famous general confession is like the new clothes of a child who does not dare to do anything for fear of soiling them. When I see him every now and then I think I have a friar before me. He speaks only of death or of what we shall find in the other world. Then he begins all over again about death and turns it inside out—while the big puppet looks better and is stronger than ever. If I dared to speak to him as you do, I should say to him, "What rubbish! I know we have to die, that is no new discovery! But until death comes let each one live as he pleases—without masquerading as a saint before others—that one pleasure which those who are always thinking of their own souls seem so much to enjoy."

As the train was leaving in a few minutes the captain bade Aresti farewell, and as he left him gave him the most remarkable news of all.

"At the pilgrimage this evening there may be a great surprise in store for you—very likely Pepé will walk in it with his scapulary."

"What! Will Pepé really be capable of exhibiting himself in that farce?" Aresti exclaimed in astonishment and then gave vent to his feelings in vigorous swearing.

Iriondo was not quite certain, but he thought it probable. It was an event that had preoccupied the family during the whole week, as his wife wished to see him walking through Bilbao bareheaded in the ranks of the faithful. What a triumph for religion! After having returned to the right way Pepé could not possibly refuse God the prestige that would be given His holy cause by the public adhesion of a man as wealthy and powerful as himself. The poor devil was resisting as he saw the ridicule this humiliation would heap upon him and he was trying to stand out, clinging to a rag of his former character. But they all fell upon him, hammering at the thin crust of his weakened will. The mother and daughter implored him, he would give them such great pleasure! Padre Pauli spoke with contempt of cowards who love God only in their own houses and fear to show it openly. That bully Urquiola laughed at him as one of those who dared not show himself in the open street for fear of the ungodly.

"He will go, I feel sure," said the captain sadly. "They will push him along—his family on one side and on the other the fear of appearing a coward. Good-bye, Luis, be prudent! There is a great storm

brewing on the horizon, beware of the squall this evening."

The doctor thoughtfully went up the steps out of the station and as he emerged onto the Bridge del Arenal he saw that many of the balconies were hung with colored draperies and mottos in praise of the Virgin of Begoña. In the Seven Streets, the oldest and most picturesque part of the city, the cheap and gaudy decorations of the houses made the place look like a miserable little village—multi-colored strips of bunting hung between flags all displayed the same legends in honor of the Lady of Biscay. The two opposing factions crowding the city watched each other angrily, and the entire populace seemed excited by the tense atmosphere. According to their sympathies for the one side or the other, the townsmen eyed with sympathy or with hatred the crowds of peasants and of miners and everyone looked at his neighbor with distrust. But the burden of each one's talk was all the same.

"This evening! . . . Oh this evening!"

After wandering about the city for more than an hour, Aresti found himself once more in the Arenal, in crossing which he came upon a long-bearded old workman in ragged clothes who greeted him with a growl, raising his hand to his cap awkwardly enough. "You know, Doctor, you are the only citizen that I salute." It was El Barbas, the terrible old misanthrope of Labarga, who spent his hours crouched on the ground, motionless, like a prophet of horrors spitting out curses and insults against the rich. His

hovel had been pulled down some time ago after the ground had been excavated from beneath it, his old companion had died of misery and he now wandered about the mines, sleeping in the open, eating anything the miners would give him and repaying this charity with insults. Whenever a blast exploded near him he would look at the workers angrily. "You brutes!" he would scream, as if they were committing a crime, "you have the dynamite in your hands, and you keep it for this!"

The doctor returned his greeting heartily.

"Hello, comrade! You here?"

Yes, he had arrived that morning in a train full of workmen travelling as might be supposed without a ticket, the "comrades" had offered to pay for it but he had refused and he had managed to hide himself so that the railroad company should make nothing out of him.

"And how about the meeting?" enquired Aresti, "are you not going to the meeting?"

El Barbas made a grimace of contempt. He did not lose his time over such silly things. He knew by heart everything they could say. Folly and cringing! To ask for more wages and to be paid in this way or the other; to beg, as those who beg for charity, greater concessions for the workers. As if that was of the slightest use! They were only temporisers. In this word he conveyed all the contempt he felt for those who, being a strong and disciplined force, sought to bring about the betterment of the worker by slow degrees.

“Temporisers, Doctor,” he cried, “nothing but temporisers. This is a country accustomed to discipline and authority, and so the poor man who in former days was a Carlist has now no trouble in believing in these half military organizations which promise him to change society by degrees. But some day they will get tired of so much moderation and labor politics and then they will follow El Barbas and others like him, and in twenty-four hours everything will be settled and it will be all over. The poor man asks for justice, and justice is not begged for in scraps, neither can it be evaded; one takes it as best one can, even should the world come to an end.”

Then he explained why he had made this journey. He had been attracted solely by what might happen in the evening. He wanted to assure himself that the poor would at last dare to rise up against the rich, he wanted to see how those enemies that he so hated would run. To-night the protection of those celestial idols to whom they raised palaces while he had to wander about the mountain like a homeless dog, would avail them nothing.

The hope of a collision and of a fight made him tremble with delight. He sniffed the atmosphere like an old war horse who neighs when he scents powder.

“A fight! It has begun already!” he exclaimed with exultation, looking towards the other end of the bridge.

Along one of the avenues on the outskirts of the city a troupe of mounted civil guards could be seen on the gallop, headed for a great slow-moving mass

of humanity, a broad band of black relieved here and there with crimson banners floating in the wind.

It was the crowd coming out of the meeting, returning to the city and stopping on their way before the balconies of the better houses to object to the decorations in honor of the Lady of Biscay. Men whistled and hooted and stones began to fly above the black mass, as window panes fell with a crash. Aresti all of a sudden found himself alone. El Barbas was running towards the crowd, shouting in his excitement, "Hit hard! Hit hard!—It's not beginning badly!—"

The doctor wanted to follow El Barbas, but stopped on seeing that the immense crowd was slowly rolling in heavy waves towards the Arenal. The cavalry, powerless to head them off, were coming along with them, hoping in this way to prevent further trouble.

The manifestation crossed the bridge, spreading out over the Arenal and the adjoining streets. The greater part were workers and young men belonging to the city whose hats could easily be distinguished among the mass of caps. Some acclaimed the Social Revolution, others shouted *vivas* for the Republic, while others still yelled "Viva España" as they stood before the mottoes in Biscayan, seeing in these praises of the Lady of Biscay an insult to the national unity. It was a fusion of many hatreds against that Bilbao which was dominated by the Company of Jesus and moulded to its likeness.

A cry of "Down with the Jesuits" was answered

by a mighty roar from the crowd. At once in all the streets adjacent to the Arenal stones were thrown and windows crashed. Street urchins with the agility of monkeys swarmed up the fronts of the houses to tear down the decorations in honor of the Virgin of Begoña which they threw to the people below who rent them to shreds.

A rumor spread like lightning through the crowd massed in the Arenal. They were setting fire to the Jesuits' church. Some of those who had been at the meeting in the suburbs, it was learned, were attacking the building. They had sprinkled it with petroleum and already the doors were burning.

The civil guards galloped to the spot, leaving the main body of manifestants to their fate. Aresti felt as enthusiastic as El Barbas. Now that hated lair was burning! Now Bilbao was awakening!

But fresh news arrived—the doors had only been scorched, the presence of the authorities had dispersed the incendiary party and the fire was extinguished.

It was now past mid-day, the groups were thinning out as many were going off to their dinners. This had only been the prologue of what was to happen later.

"We will meet here in the evening," they said one to another as they moved off.

Aresti turned into the Swiss Restaurant where at all tables people were discussing what was likely to happen in the afternoon—the pilgrimage had been summoned to meet at three o'clock in the Arenal, and

there all the different processions would arrive from their distant parishes to join each other at the Church of St. Nicholas. The plan had been a premeditated one to attract attention, to take possession of the town and to make an arrogant and pompous display as an open challenge.

Many hoped that the provocative festival would be prevented. It was said that the Governor was using his influence with the organizers to induce them to desist, but Padre Pauli flatly refused, hypocritically in the name of liberty, while his acolyte Urquiola spoke of the coming battle of the evening with all the air of a born commander.

On the other hand there was much disappointment at the rumor that the pilgrimage might be stopped. After all, it was an event that would enliven the grey and monotonous life of the people. Aresti never doubted but that it would take place; he knew the organizers, and knew of their intention to arouse the growing impiety, to attack it and give it a battle and so to strengthen their control which they felt to be in danger.

Two men were disputing at one of the tables.

"I took good notice of the manifestants," cried one of them, "they were all named Perez or Martinez, all 'maketos' or sons of 'maketos,' a lot of scoundrels who have invaded our country. Not one among them bore any of the four Biscayan surnames."

He spoke with great pride of these four surnames which all the Biscayan party held to be a proof of nobility.

"But I am called by one of them," retorted his opponent hotly, "and yet I hope that this afternoon they will break the spirit of this pilgrimage. Would to God they could sweep away all the Jesuits!"

The two factions that were disturbing the town were felt also in the restaurant, setting one half of the customers against the other half and exciting them to such a pitch that they almost threw the plates and dishes at one another and seemed about to attack each other with their knives.

At two o'clock Aresti returned to the Arenal. Fresh groups were assembling close to the bridge, eyeing with hostility those who were hurrying to join the parish processions. Most contradictory rumors were floating about among the people—the pilgrimage would not take place; it was opposed by the Governor whom the Biscayans in their separatist fervor styled, "The Consul of Spain"; then the news flew from mouth to mouth that the festival most certainly would take place; that the parties were assembling in each parish and would all soon arrive to meet at St. Nicholas.

The great square was black with people. Every inch of the surrounding pavements and of the adjoining streets was occupied but the centre of the Arenal remained empty. Instinctively every one kept away from the large open space which seemed destined for the collision between the two factions.

Aresti felt himself carried along by a violent rush of the crowd as they heard the approach of their enemies. Then a storm of shouts broke out in one of

the side streets—suddenly stopped by the report of firearms.

Above the mass of heads the standards of the first procession passed by waving unsteadily above the tumultuous, surging stream. Pushed and jostled and without knowing how, the doctor found himself in the middle of the Arenal, close to the ranks of the pilgrims. They walked in groups, bare headed, the women with stern, fanatical eyes staring at the crowd, the men clutching huge sticks, and wearing on their breasts the scapulary of the Virgin of Begoña. The firing ceased as the procession entered the square and the pilgrims began to sing a hymn in Biscayan addressed to the Lady of Biscay, which the crowd answered with the Marseillaise and the Internationale.

The pilgrims assembled before the Church of St. Nicholas toward which the crowd slowly advanced. The empty space between them was growing narrower, threatening sticks were flourished, hoots and insults alternated with the hymns. Suddenly thousands of heads turned to see a fresh procession coming from over the bridge. It had assembled at the Jesuit Residencia and comprised all the most brilliant members of the devout army who intended marching up to Begoña, all the elite of Bilbao—the rich families of the city, the agitators for Biscayan independence, the alumni from Deusto, and all the most celebrated Fathers of the Company who had organized the different workmen's associations to stem the growing impiety of the city.

They passed by in groups looking defiance on the crowd, puffing out their chests so that the Virgin's badge should be clearly seen, keeping one hand the while in their pockets where the outline of firearms was easily disclosed. The ladies walked with martial step not seeming in the least intimidated by the hostile attitude of the spectators, looking with disdain in fact on that rabble who supported themselves on whatever pittance the rich families chose to give them.

A storm of yells and insults and imprecations burst forth. Aresti saw Urquiola pass by, revolver in hand, followed by the students of Deusto and some sturdy peasants; he seemed proud at being able to realize within Bilbao what his forebears had been able to attempt only in the surrounding mountains during the two sieges.

Viva Biscay! Viva religion and Our Lady of Be-goña! Death to the liberals!

The pupils from the Jesuit university then raised *vivas* for the Catholic Union, to which the peasants replied with roars of enthusiasm, not in the least understanding what it all meant, but guessing it was something levelled at the godless people of the hated Bilbao.

Aresti saw Sanchez Morueta's wife and daughter pass and afterwards the Lizamendi amongst another party of ladies marching with defiant step. They looked about them on either side as if searching for someone in the crowd and catching sight of him, the mother and the eldest daughter smiled, delighted at

not being mistaken. So he also was there! The wicked man was where they expected to find him! The doctor could see the look of pious resignation and pity which his wife raised to heaven, as if she were imploring pardon for his lost soul with the groans of a victim. Immediately afterwards he saw the huge figure of his cousin, standing out from amidst a group of cassocks, the medallion of the Virgin flashing through the tangle of his beard, as he walked proudly and with a hard and belligerent expression that Aresti had never witnessed upon his face before.

The doctor could bear to see no more, but just as he turned away the ground seemed to be opening under his feet and all the miners were tumbling over one another in the terror of flight. Sticks were broken on backs that resounded like empty boxes under the blows; many fell, their faces streaming with blood; others in their panic trampled on their fallen comrades, while from all directions revolver shots were heard.

The ladies ran to take refuge in St. Nicholas and the spectators on the pavement fled helter skelter into the cafés, breaking the windows and overturning chairs and tables in their terror.

In a moment the square was almost empty, strewn with sticks, hats and caps; a few of the wounded covered with blood were dragging themselves along the pavement; others were being carried by their friends to the nearest dispensary, and only the most

determined spirits of either faction continued to exchange blows.

Volleys were being fired from the portico of St. Nicholas from all the cheap revolvers bought the day before by the organizers of the pilgrimage, shots without any aim, which lost themselves in the sand of the walks or imbedded themselves in the trees. The greater part of the workers were unarmed and fought with their fists or with sticks, shouting out insults and blasphemy against the Virgin of Begoña and her devotees. In the excitement, as the general fight had split up, many were fighting in groups or individually and such was the confusion that men of the same party did not recognize each other and often struck at friends believing them to be enemies.

Aresti stood motionless, paying no attention to the bullets which were barking the trees at a short distance from him; he felt himself pushed hither and thither by the rushes of the combatants; everything was seen through a grey mist as though the sun had hidden itself, and his feet constantly stumbled over fallen bodies from which came pitiful groans.

In this twilight of bewilderment he thought he saw an enormous priest gathering his cloak in one hand, and firing a revolver with the other at a workman, who evaded the shots with the agility of a monkey.

"Have done!" the man cried, brandishing a knife and jumping out of the way with a bound whenever the priest aimed at him and drew the trigger. But when the chambers were empty, the workman with a

ferocious laugh fell on the priest, seizing him and falling with him to the ground, burying his knife in his adversary's body with such violence that the blade broke in two.

Suddenly Aresti thought a tree had fallen across his shoulders. It was a blow from a heavy stick that aroused him from his bewilderment and made him roar with rage, waking the wild beast in him and putting an end to his fine neutrality as a superior being. He brandished his stick and with the lust of blood and the longing to do damage, he laid it on right and left without looking to see whom he was attacking, never remembering that it might be a friend.

His advance was checked by a young workman falling against his breast, an over-grown and weakly young fellow whose work had evidently been beyond his strength. He staggered as though he were drunk and as he raised his hands to his bloody face and attempted to steady himself a huge fist struck him once more and felled him to the ground.

Aresti, with his feet encumbered by the body of the fallen man, was ready with his stick as he saw the huge fist that hit with a dull thud was again raised to strike him, but his arm was arrested in mid-air as he recognized the man who was attacking him.

"You! . . . You! . . ." he cried in a voice that seemed to tear his throat.

Sanchez Morueta stood before him with his fist raised, his beard in disorder, his eyes blazing, longing to exterminate the impious rabble who insulted

decent people and had forced the ladies to take refuge in the church.

Recognizing Aresti his arm fell and he bowed his head as if in shame, at the same moment something soft and warm struck his cheek, running down the threads of his beard. His Luis, his brother had spat in his face! It was his Luis' expression of loathing that could find no other means of wounding him; Luis, whose hands bound by former affection, refused to strike; it was the bitter contempt he felt at seeing his cousin overpowering with the well fed strength of a prosperous animal that wretched abortion of misery that lay with its bloody face grovelling on the ground.

Sanchez Morueta looked at his cousin with meek, bewildered eyes, bovine eyes which seemed to ask for mercy while at the same time he passed his hand over his beard wiping away the spit of hatred.

He tried to speak, but could not, and just then a black phantom waving its cloak-like funereal wings seized and pulled him away. It was Padre Pauli.

"Let us go from here, Don José. Let us go to Begoña! To Begoña!"

And he dragged him along with paternal solicitude as though the big man were the principal banner of the pilgrimage.

Aresti stood motionless, ashamed of his outbreak; still he thought it was well done now that it was past recall. The rush of the fleeing crowd woke him from his abstraction; the civil guard were clearing the square at a trot and threatening the populace with

their swords; the pilgrims were huddled together in front of the church, and the mass of the people were crowded onto the pavements, leaving the centre of the square empty except when a few parties of men crossed it bearing in their arms some wounded friend.

The stones hurled by the mob struck on the façade of St. Nicholas Church and were replied to by shots from its two towers. The mob unarmed, fired at and wounded by those in safety from that height, roared impotently and in desperation endeavored to rush the church. But they ran against an obstacle which had succeeded in interposing itself between the two contending parties, a blue and red barrier amid which flashed rifle barrels and bright accoutrements.

Two companies of infantry had entered the square at the double, drawing up in fighting array in front of the church. These were the *guiris*, the *ches*; it was armed Spain arriving, the hated red-trousered "Maketania" to the rescue of liberal impiety, the enemies of the resurrection of the ancient Biscay. The young soldiers, pale, with compressed lips, rested on their arms, midway between the showers of stones and the revolver shots from the towers they stood facing the great mass of people who were protesting against the pilgrimage.

They had come to keep order, but their eyes looked instinctively towards the crowd of pilgrims as if they longed to turn on their heels and fire point blank at the church. Those armed and vociferous priests, those strong peasants as submissive as animals, those young gentlemen giving themselves the airs of lead-

ers, they were the eternal enemy. The soldiers recognized in them those who in former times had murdered their brethren in the mountains and who even now longed to return to the struggle of guerilla warfare. But the iron and irresistible hand of duty kept the double file of men in red and blue uniforms motionless.

An officer staggered for a moment, then passing his sword to a soldier he put his hand to his shoulder—a bullet fired by one of those shooting from the church towers had wounded him. His face was contracted with pain, less from the wound than from the bitterness of a sacrifice without glory, of losing his blood, not on the mountain, face to face with a worthy enemy, but at the door of a church, possibly by the hand of a sacristan or of one of those effeminate priests, hidden high up in the towers and crying out like women while acclaiming the Church and the Virgin.

The civil guard were driving the pilgrims out of the square. They left the church in small parties carrying their torn and bedraggled banners with them and escorted by the horsemen they began the ascent to Begoña.

The angry mob held back by the troops could hear the different brotherhoods as they moved off up the various steep streets that led to the Sanctuary shouting, "Viva for the Virgin!"

"To Begoña! To Begoña!" yelled Urquiola at the head of one of the parties, flourishing his revolver.

The acclamations to the Virgin were accompanied by frequent discharges of firearms as the chanting pilgrims took shots at the workers who were hooting at them from the hill side.

Little by little the front of St. Nicholas became deserted; a dead man lay on the pavement over whom two civil guards were keeping watch; further on several groups were gathered about their wounded comrades; some priests slipped along close to the wall with stealthy step, trying to avoid the crowd and to regain their homes quietly to have their wounds treated.

Aresti spent more than an hour going from shop to shop and from café to café, dragged along by those who knew him to give first aid wherever a wounded man lay, so that the unhappy victims of the fight might then be carried to the hospital by the willing arms of friends.

He attended to all indiscriminately, whether they wore on their breasts the Virgin's scapulary, or whether they found relief in their paroxysms of pain by shouting *vivas* for Liberty or the Republic. The wounded flesh, the blood staining the pavements and the floors of the cafés, filled him with an immense sadness. Despondent, he pondered on the eternal infancy of man, killing and wounding his brothers for the sake of a coarsely carved piece of wood mounted high among lights and flowers, the while all unchecked such terrible enemies as hunger and injustice combined to frustrate any common and fraternal endeavor of humanity to free itself.

While men were killing one another for the glory of the Virgin of Begoña, the worm wiser than they would go on boring through the wooden bowels of that smiling fetish; or maybe some rat might gnaw the feet of the miraculous image beneath its outstanding mantle of precious stones.

The doctor, worn out by the emotions of the afternoon and the strain of operations and bandaging carried on in the midst of curious crowds, heaved a sigh of relief when there were no more wounded to be brought to him. He was glad to walk down to the banks of the river to think over his encounter with his cousin, which most assuredly must be the last. The insult to Sanchez Morueta pricked his conscience; that spittle seemed to have fallen on his own heart. Ah! the Intruder! the cursed Intruder! how it had thrust itself between them, crushing out with the cold power of death all affection, blotting out a whole past of brotherly love! . . .

They had fought against each other hand to hand as so many brothers had done during the civil wars, but in their savage fury a blow had been struck at their very hearts which must part them for ever. Aresti felt he had finished for ever with his family and that he was now alone in the world.

While the doctor was deep in these thoughts several parties of excited young men came running toward him along the banks of the Nervion, their loud shouts joining with the shrill screaming of a group of women whom he could see behind them gesticulating and crossing themselves madly. What was

happening? Was the world come to an end! . . . A mob of the rioters, driven to fury after the struggle in the Arenal, had overrun the Seven Streets and had scaled the outsides of the chapels that sheltered the images of the patron saints of Bilbao. Gaining entrance in this way, they had torn the saints from their niches and were now dragging them along to the river banks amid the kicks and insults of the crowd, which sought thus to revenge on those painted and gilt wooden bodies the blood that had been shed of bodies made of bone and muscle. To the river with the Saints! And the Virgin and Blessed Ones were hurlèd head foremost into the water, floating after their first immersion, with the lightness of old wood.

The mob followed along the banks the slow descent of the images carried down by the current, hooting and yelling as they watched the Saints pitching and tossing on the eddies, while women with the devotion of martyrs screamed insults at the impious crowd, threatening it with their clenched fists.

The Virgin of Begoña was what most attracted their attention. It was she who was guilty of everything! So they whistled and cursed as the image floated slowly downwards on its back, its gilded body and saintly doll-like face appearing on a level with the water. A waterman crossing the river in his barge rowed towards the image as if he intended to bar its passage. The women shouted with delight, assuming that with pious hands the man was going to save the Virgin.

The boatman when he had come close to the image stopped rowing. Then lifting an oar and after looking at those on the banks, he dealt the Virgin a tremendous blow which sank her in a swirl of water never to rise again. It was then the turn of the miners to burst out in loud shouts of exultation while the pilgrims raised their eyes to heaven and crossed themselves. Even in its waters the impiety of the town was shown!

In the midst of another crowd Aresti recognized El Barbas in a miserable looking individual who was haranguing his hearers with the wild gestures of a madman.

"What has happened today is nothing," he yelled. "It is not so bad a thing that you have laid your hands on those who have deceived you for so long. But after this you must settle your accounts with those that rob you. To-day it has been the battle of the humbugging Saints, to-morrow it will be the battle for bread. All those who by their labor have produced the wealth of these robbers here, will come down from the mountains and claim their share. We will have nothing to do with petitions granted, nor raised wages, nor charities. Away with the temporisers! Let every man have what belongs to him, and for those that oppose it there is dynamite! Curse it all—dynamite!"

Aresti moved away, so that this fanatic who seemed maddened by the afternoon's bloody fight should not see him.

His words recalled to the doctor's mind all that

wretched population of the mines, the despair of those athirst for justice. From those red crags, transformed and overturned by the workman's pick and the blaster's thunder, a fresh danger was threatening the prosperous and opulent city. After this collision provoked by the dominating fanaticism of the ruling class would surely come the rising of the oppressed, and the irresistible demands of misery.

An army of enemies was concealed behind those mountains that closed the horizon, a starving horde that would one day fall on the city as the vultures of absolutism had settled on it in former days. Bilbao was threatened with a third siege, but in this next one the enemy would not pause before its outer defences; it would spread through the streets and lay siege to wealth in its magnificent habitations. The war in the name of the past would be waged in defence of the future. The new besiegers would flaunt their misery as a standard and they would take as a war cry the rights of humanity.

Aresti considered the possibility of the disappearance of all this wealth which was the origin of so many evils. Of what use had been all these treasures of the mines? Certainly they had embellished the exterior of the city, giving it the aspect of a capital; the greatness of modern industry reigned supreme on the river, with its shipping and its factory chimneys; but life was more dreary than ever before. With the wealth had also come the black robed company, who made themselves masters of everything, who took possession of men's consciences, and ended

by laying their hands on all material property.

If the wealth of the town were suddenly to run dry, then those birds of evil presage would wing their flight to other countries. The soil might be poorer, but like a plant the joy of life would again spring up in it.

The ancient Bilbao of the merchants and sailors before men knew the value of its iron, with the peace of slow and steady work and the friendly amenities of its old customs, had been far happier than the modern town with its sudden growth, its wild ostentation, its unequal, rapidly made wealth that, leaving throughout the country scarcely any beneficial trace of its passage, lost itself in the dark maw of the black intruder who had arrived at Fortune's supreme moment to sit down by the side of the favored ones, to offer them heaven in exchange for a participation in the booty.

The exploitation of Nature, the extraction of its iron vitals had served to produce happiness only for the few and to permit the holy parasite who hid behind to become the true master of everything. Such a Carnival of Fortune must come to an end. Its only use had been to give fresh strength to religious fanaticism and to arouse poverty's hatreds with the display of a mad concentration of wealth.

The mines were growing poorer; some optimists gave them twenty years of life, the most sanguine even gave them thirty, but the final exhaustion would come, and then—nothing. The mountain would be denuded, with its limestone skeleton laid bare. Of

the mantle, richer far than that of many of the rulers of the earth, that had covered it for centuries, there would be left not the slightest thread. Many mines already lay abandoned, like old horses forgotten when they can no longer be of use. In others they were using the refuse of ancient workings and reclaiming from them the iron that had been left by primitive methods. In Gallarta whole houses that had been built many years ago were being pulled down to salvage the mineral of their walls. People were living on the relics of prosperous times, as in a house where poverty begins to appear and the scraps of the previous day's meal are used up for the following morning's lunch. The total exhaustion of ore was to be foreseen, when all makeshifts would become useless, when only the poor and sterile earth without a particle of iron would be left. Then would come—let him save himself who could—terrible days of a return to poverty, the disorderly and headlong flight of the multitude, which at present cheated its hunger by working in the quarries, leaving the better part of its life among the rocks. Then would also come the isolation of the mighty who would shut themselves up in the ark of their wealth in their endeavor to keep afloat in this final deluge.

Then the land would be one over which Fortune had passed, as over other lands, leaving only the lightest footmarks. Bilbao would present the same aspect as the historical towns of Italy, once great and filling the world with the products of their commerce, today only the cemeteries of a glorious past.

The splendid palaces of the suburbs would remain and the ample estuary with its port ready to receive the fleets of the whole world, but the palaces would be deserted, the harbor with its few boats in its melancholy vastness would be like a huge cage without its birds. The foundries, the blast furnaces, the shafts, would be in ruins, their graves marked by grim chimneys standing like those ancient columns which make the solitude of dead cities of antiquity ever tragic.

Intoxicated by the maddening wine of fortune the owners of so much wealth had never thought of creating fresh industries which would be free from dependence on the mines. Industrial struggles with all their complications and risks had not tempted them, accustomed as they were to the easy and certain gains of a country where they had only to tear the boulders from the ground to become rich. The life of the city, the movement in its harbor, the existence of its factories, everything depended on that red soil torn from the mountain. Iron was the life blood of Bilbao, the breath of its lungs, and a sudden cessation of production would threaten the splendid town with sudden death. All that wealth created as it were over night and which for the unhappy masses was an insulting opulence, would vanish like a magic vision. Possibly, even, the cruel sea might close the estuary with a bar of sand over which the current only now and then would be able to carry a trading boat.

Aresti cherished this prospect of desolation. His beloved Bilbao would then be once more the com-

mercial town of the famous *ordenanzas*, with a peaceful and steady middle class life, without enormous fortunes but with its conscience clear of the cruel remorse that would weigh upon it when the great army of poverty defiled through its streets, those pariahs of work who would come to display their rags and their faces wan with hunger before the palaces of the rich.

And when fickle Fortune took her departure, the black figures who followed her footsteps like marauders, men who only came to speak of heaven where the benefits of the earth were being piled up, would also take their flight. They would not hesitate to abandon an exhausted country. They would forget it as they forgot all poor countries and never showed themselves in them—as though no sons of their God lived there.

As Aresti was reminded that the ruin of his country would be the signal for these invaders to strike their tents, he longed that it might come to pass as soon as possible and he smiled as he realized the exhaustion of the mines might be a providential and saving catastrophe.

He spent more than two hours strolling on the river bank, until the day began to fade. In the distance towards the sea the sun was sinking behind the mass of Serantes, and near at hand a party of youths who had been following the slow floating journey of the last Saint were throwing stones at it so that its departure would not be retarded by the backwaters in the current.

After the emotions of the afternoon, the majestic calm of the summer twilight gently enfolded Aresti and turned his mind to the future of the race. He pondered now of humanity, of the long and painful journey it still had before it in the sombre forest through which it was travelling, its feet still bound by the chains of the past, stretching out its imploring hands towards the ideal, towards justice that shone far, so very far away, like a star almost lost in the night.

The sun had now set; on the waters flushed by the crimson splendor of the sky, the last Saint was still floating.

Aresti thought of the eclipse of the gods in the last twilight of religions. Oh! if only the night that was now coming could be eternal for the old idols! If only the sun when it rose afresh could see the earth cleansed of all the legends created by human weakness, hesitating and trembling before the dark secret of death.

The doctor watched the flight of the idol on the water, it seemed to fascinate him as he followed it along the river bank. He dreamed of the glorious day of human redemption when men would have done with these little gods and goddesses with their set effeminate smiles which for centuries had kept humanity in slavery, singing to it the hymn of humility and repugnance of life and binding it in an eternal childhood with the fallacy of a cowardly resignation to all earthly injustice as a certain means of gaining heaven. . . .

No. Those idols had deceived humanity far too long and they ought to die. Their days might still be long, but they were numbered. Men were beginning to curse them, and to stretch out hostile hands towards them with the supreme rebellion of sacrilege. They were the decoys of injustice. They would descend from their altars as the gods of paganism who were far more beautiful than they, had descended when their hour had come. They would figure in museums among the divinities of the past, but because of their ugliness, without gaining the admiration inspired by harmonious nudity. They would be confounded with the grotesque fetishes of primitive peoples—and humanity now become incapable of clothing its aspirations and longings under material forms, would adore in the infinite of its idealism the two only divinities of the new religion, Science and Social Justice.

THE END

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